



# Teacher Professionalism and Accountability

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Working Paper 2016/01

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An initiative of the South African Research Chair in  
Teacher Education

## **ABSTRACT**

This is a review of literature on teacher professionalism and accountability. The theoretical component focuses on English-language scholarship on the topic stemming from the global North and Africa, while the empirical component focuses on longitudinal studies from the global North and southern Africa – currently absent as a coherent review in the literature.

The review of theoretical literature indicates that, across countries, the notion of teacher professionalism remains highly contested, and there are doubts as to whether teaching can be spoken of in the same way as other professions. This view hinges on a posited theoretical tension between accountability regimes and the professional standing of teachers. The literature suggests that, as accountability regimes deepen, teachers tend to be conceptualised as lacking in competence and in need of supervision. Teacher autonomy is consequently undermined and teaching is viewed as a “semi-profession.”

Within Africa, the review indicates a complex relationship between teachers’ past struggles against colonialism and apartheid, and their present attempts to assert autonomy and participate in educational governance. In South Africa, teachers are seen to embrace hybrid identities that combine unionist and professional traits. Such hybridity is inflected by teachers’ race, class and gender position. There is relatively little analytical and historical work on the ways in which teachers’ professional status is shaped by race, class and gender. This is particularly urgent given high levels of inequality and violence in the schooling sector.

The review of longitudinal studies suggests that there is a limited focus on ordinary teachers’ views and perceptions of their professional roles. High profile multi-country studies, such as TALIS and SACMEQ, have focussed largely on teacher education and subject knowledge matters. While TALIS and the Eurydice network research are increasingly gathering subjective data from teachers, there is limited longitudinal data on teachers’ views of their professional lives and the challenges they face. In South Africa particularly, such research is only starting.

## **KEYWORDS**

professionalism, accountability, autonomy, unions, governance

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*This work is part of the Teacher Professionalism and Accountability Study.*

*The Centre for International Teacher Education (CITE) is an initiative of the South African Research Chair in Teacher Education. The Working Paper series provides a forum for work in progress that seeks to elicit comments and generate discussion.*

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## PART ONE: TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM AND ACCOUNTABILITY- MEANING AND PRACTICE

### I. INTRODUCTION

In reviewing the literature on teacher professionalism and accountability, several concepts loom large. These include teacher “autonomy”, knowledge, service and teacher “unionism”. Section II, which looks more closely at the notion of professionalism, probes in much greater detail the notion of teacher autonomy, and the concepts of “knowledge expertise” and “service”, as well as exploring the notions of “teaching as craft”, and whether teaching is a profession or semi-profession. A key question that emerges is whether teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be regarded as a profession in its classical construction, or whether it is a “semi-profession”, or belongs to the craft professions. Section III delves into teacher “unionism” and the debate as to whether teachers be regarded as professionals or workers, or whether teachers have “hybrid” identities as “worker professionals” or “professional workers”; it also discusses the role of teachers in peacebuilding and social justice contexts, highlighting their identities as “reflexive professionals” and “transformative agents”; and concludes with an analysis of the political role of teachers, especially in the African context, and its implications for understandings of professionalism.

Throughout the review, emphasis is placed on the fluid and changing nature of teacher professionalism and teacher accountability. As Hilferty (2008) suggests, these are socially constructed concepts that have been constantly defined and redefined through educational theory, policy and practice. Accommodated in a variety of definitions the terms have been used either descriptively or as ideological concepts to change, manage or control the nature of teachers’ work (Lawn, 1996). Shifts in education provisioning across diverse contexts across the world have also added new dimensions to debates on teacher professionalism and teacher accountability, especially where education provision is centralized or decentralized (Hilferty, 2008). In this regard, Sachs (2001) highlights three paradoxes that have emerged in the context of reforms around marketization and decentralisation with implications for teachers globally:

- Increasing calls for teacher professionalism related to a changing occupational identity at a time of deskilling of teachers and intensification of their work;
- Recognising that while reimagining of classroom practice is highly demanding, resource allocation for teacher education and development is diminishing; and
- Exhorting the organised teaching profession to be autonomous while there is simultaneously increasing pressure from employers, the state and public for teachers to be more accountable and to maintain standards (Sachs, 2001, 150).

Consistent with these debates, Part IV explores how the intensification of accountability regimes have impacted teachers' work and contributed to the erosion of their professional autonomy. However, the literature also reveals that professionalism, accountability, unionism and autonomy are refracted through a terrain of struggle.

Thus, while the notion of professionalism is regarded as a double-edged sword, used simultaneously by the state to control teachers, and by teachers and their organisations in defence of their autonomy, teachers in countries such as the United Kingdom, Mexico and South Africa have also turned to unionism, largely around issues of better salaries and conditions of service, thereby adopting militant tactics in advancing their claims to autonomy, and countering the effects of increased accountability (Govender, 2009 and 2013). One further dimension is the expectation that teachers oversee social cohesion within schools and classroom, where values formation has become one of their core responsibilities (Hilferty, 2008).

Moreover, while most accounts of teacher professionalism and its evolution have their origins in Anglo-Saxon traditions from the global North, there is limited literature and documented research on the subject that speaks to African experiences and the global South more generally.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, certain trends or patterns relating to conceptualisations of teachers in the global South in

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<sup>1</sup> With specific reference to the literature and research in the English language.

general and in African countries in particular, may be gleaned. In parts of Africa, the influence of Christian mission education linked to countries' colonial experience has historically shaped teachers' professional identity. While this has given rise to the notion of the "good" or "caring" teacher, dedicated to the needs of learners and communities, African teachers have also adopted militant, unionist tactics in demanding better status and conditions of service at particular historical moments (Vilardo, 1996; Govender, 2009). These, and related issues, and how they manifested in African countries are also explored in the first part of the review.

Part One concludes with a focus on South Africa, starting with the impact of colonial education on teachers and then tracing the history of education developments through to the post-1994 period when teacher accountability regimes re-emerged under the rubric of education transformation, and it ends with an analysis of the current status of teacher professionalism and accountability in the country.

## II. PROFESSIONALISM

Although its meaning is highly contested, teacher professionalism has come to be associated with issues of autonomy and control over work, ethical conduct, subject/specialised knowledge and certification, social status, high salary levels, and the question of standards for controlling entrance into a profession. In the words of Furlong et al, 2000 (cited in Sachs, 2001, 150):

The three concepts of knowledge, autonomy and responsibility central to a traditional notion of professionalism, are often seen as interrelated. It is because professionals face complex and unpredictable situations that they need a specialized body of knowledge; if they are to apply that knowledge, it is argued that they need the autonomy to make their own judgments. Given that they have autonomy, it is essential that they act with responsibility – collectively they need to develop appropriate professional values.

Thus, teachers traditionally make similar claims to those in other occupational fields such as law and medicine (Greenwood, 1957; Wilensky, 1964; Barber, 1965; Bidwell, 1965; Volmer and Mills, 1966; Weick, 1976; Saks, 1983) about their professionalism based largely on their declarations of expert knowledge, long periods of study, autonomy, and ethical practice (Gale and Densmore 2003, 74).

According to Sexton (2007), the five most commonly featured attributes on professions are:

- Personal responsibility underpinned by a code of ethics;
- Considerable autonomy;
- Intellectually-based, extended training;
- Presence of a recognised knowledge-base; and
- Spirit of altruism.

Sexton sees these findings as more or less complying with Hoyle and John's (1995) analysis of the professions, which can be grouped under three headings: the knowledge attributes; the autonomy attribute; and the service attributes (Jackson, 1970; Hoyle, 1980; Shulman, 1980; Sockett, 1990; Sexton, 2007). These form what Locke (2004) describes as "the classical triangle", and constitute the traditional conception of professionalism that has characterised teaching in both developed and developing contexts (Govender, 2009). This conceptualisation of teacher professionalism is articulated within a broader view of the social purposes of education, including those tied to the many functions of the school, including the academic, vocational, social, civic and personal functions that must be balanced in classrooms every day (Gale and Densmore 2003, 74). It further emphasises the need for teachers as professionals to constantly evaluate their teaching decisions against the goals of preparing learners to be equitable and interdependent participants in democratic societies (Darling Hammond & Bransford, in Cochran Smith 2001, 55). This view presupposes an "intellectual" role in society, wherein teachers act in accordance with professional codes of

conduct, have mastery over subject content knowledge and enjoy high prestige and status in society as “professionals” (Carrim, 1997, 157-8).

Unsurprisingly, the notion of professionalism has also emerged in discussions relating to “teacher quality”, wherein commitment to maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct, lifelong teacher education and the exercise of professional behaviour and autonomy are stressed (ODE, 2013). “One component of this is professional freedom, which recognises that the teacher is best equipped to decide which methods to use in order to create an optimal learning environment” (ODE, 2013, 4). This body of literature also focuses on the exercise of personal attributes and values, which impact teachers’ conceptions of work and their identities, including their professional commitment to social justice and equity. It further highlights the ability of the teacher to develop good relationships with parents and the local community as an important aspect of their professional responsibilities and roles. (ibid: 5)

However, the traditional view has been seriously questioned with the passage of time, and today, to consider teachers as professionals, is to enter into controversial terrain, as there is much debate on whether teachers are indeed professionals, semi-professionals, workers or a combination of these (Bascia, 2009, 481; Govender, 2013). Several scholars of teachers and professionalism believe that in comparison to occupational groups, such as lawyers and doctors, teachers do not compare well (Carrim, 1997, Bascia, 2009, Gamble, 2010 and Ravitch, undated). Gamble (2010, 11) goes as far as to assert that no modern profession can emulate the ideal-type traits of the classical professions, such as medicine and law – not even modern versions of those professions themselves. In her view, the definitional test of a profession is premised on occupational groups having independent conditions of employment, a clear definition of a knowledge base and clear articulation of the boundaries necessary between professional and lay activity (Gamble, 2010:11). Complementing this view, Bascia (2009) and Carrim (1997) argue that teachers are not as highly regarded and not always seen to possess the requisite status, respect and authority of professional occupations; moreover, although certificated and qualified, they do not enjoy the same degree of autonomy as other professionals (Carrim, 1997, 158); and teachers are not in control of many aspects of their work and careers – training and entry



requirements are set by state bodies and policy makers, who also determine issues of teaching content, pedagogy and organisation (Bascia, 2009).

In similar vein, Ravitch (undated), in reviewing teacher professionalism in the USA, argues that the analogy with law and medicine fails because the latter had certain qualities that education lacked. Key among these, is that both law and medicine have a specific body of knowledge that the future member of the profession is required to learn; this body of knowledge has a significant, common, well-defined core of studies, covering commonly agreed upon knowledge and skills, that would be found in any reputable professional school; in education, she argues, there has been a failure to establish canons of knowledge about subject matter and about effective practice to guide future teachers. Second, both law and medicine have well established research-based standards and procedures – in law, there is a body of case law and commonly accepted procedures that future lawyers must master; in medicine, there are standard tests, standard diagnoses, and standard treatments for known ailments that future doctors must master. However, this is not the case in education, where pedagogues have debated what to teach, how to teach, how to test, whether to test, and which research methods are acceptable (Ravitch, undated, 2-3). In the South African context, given evidence questioning teachers' mastery of subject content (Taylor, 2011; Spaull, 2013), the case to be made out for teachers as professionals is further weakened. However, it is worth bearing in mind that the localised and context specific nature of teachers' work inevitably makes it hard to generalise, particularly in contexts where there is a wide gap generally between the "urban" class of professionals and rural teachers, as the Nelson Mandela Foundation study (2005) has shown.

Significantly, teachers in many countries are employees of the state and, as such, are bound by state policies on the role of schools and teachers in their society. Thus, for many teachers, as agents of the state, their professional autonomy has become constrained over time, and the social status and prestige associated with "professionals", undermined. This view is emphasised by Whitty, who explains:

In practice, of course, in most countries the characteristics of a profession have been increasingly determined by the state, which became the major stakeholder in defining professionalism

in the twentieth century. Most professionals are now employed, or at least regulated by governments. Professional status, therefore, is typically dependent on the sort of bargain an occupation has struck with the state – what is sometimes called its “professional mandate”. The nature of teachers’ professional mandate has become a key policy issue for governments in many countries, sometimes as part of a broader attempt to redefine professionalism, especially in the public sector, and sometimes as a specific aspect of education reform (2008, cited in Gamble, 2010, 12).

However, constraints on teacher professional autonomy are not only the result of national policy. Professional status is today regulated at state or provincial level, and even at lower levels due to decentralisation policies and local school autonomy. This has led to the creation of fairly autonomous bodies overseeing teacher professionalism in many places and this responsibility is either in the hands of a state-controlled body or a semi-autonomous entity like a registration board or state college of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000). There are also different quality assurance and inspectorate bodies, which might be federal but are usually seen to be very independent. It is in fact the ability of these bodies to exert tighter control that can also lead to interpretations of teacher autonomy as “box ticking.”

The gatekeeping role of the state is often described as “professionalisation from above” (Siegrist, 1994, 11), and in contemporary parlance, described as “managerialism” or “managerial professionalism” (see, for example, Sachs, 2001). Managerialism, as discussed elsewhere in this review, is particularly pertinent when applied to occupational groups, such as teachers, who as employees of the state, belong at best, to the “semi-professions”. A number of scholars are therefore inclined to conclude that teaching belongs to the quasi or semi-professions Etzioni (1969, cited in Bascia, 2009; Gamble 2010). In this context, many scholars have suggested that the notion of the “nobility of the teaching profession” does not correspond with the lived experiences of teachers (Carrim, 1997, 158; also see Bascia, 2009 and Sachs, 2001). Moreover, the fact that teachers are accountable to an employer, in the production of a specific

service, teaching, has given rise to the notion of teachers as ordinary workers, especially in contexts where the state is the employer. However, the perception of teachers as workers is often associated with particular historical and economic conjunctures, as in South Africa's case (see section VI). It is thus clear that identifying teachers as professionals is beset with problems.

A related view contends that teaching is not a profession but rather a craft. The claim rests on reference to the experiential component of teacher knowledge:

We would define teaching, rather as a craft-profession. Unlike the traditional professions, a craft-profession does not rest on a highly formal codified body of knowledge. Instead, competence for craft-professionals is defined in terms of various skills and practices, reflecting a different sort of knowledge base ... much of their knowledge is embodied, something that they learn by doing and that is experientially learned, rather than acquired in a systematic, highly formal manner. This is not to say that such knowledge is necessarily less substantial, or of a lower order, than more abstract forms of knowledge. It is just different. (Pratte & Rury, 1991: 61-62, cited in Gamble, 2010, 15)

However, the “teaching as craft” thesis, as singular explanation, has been seriously questioned. Muller and Young (2014, 5), for example, while stressing that “specialised knowledge” is at the core of what distinguishes professions from other occupations, are quick to point out that to suggest “a strong split between knowledge and action” would, in the case of professional knowledge, be counter-productive. They suggest that there is a continuum between the two, implying two kinds of knowledge, “knowledge that” (or specialised knowledge) and “knowledge how” (practical expertise), which are interrelated (ibid, 7).

Thus, for an occupational group to lay claim to being a profession, it needs to demonstrate possession of professional knowledge that incorporates both theoretical (conceptual), as well as practical/contextual (craft) knowledge. In a similar vein Gamble (2010, 33) argues that “there is no need to discard the notion of teaching as craft or to be overly cynical about the increasing emergence of bureaucratic measures that require teachers to meet their professional mandates.

Like in all other professions there will and should be aspects of craft, of rational expertise, of bureaucratic accountability and all the other elements which work together to produce professionalism.” In Gamble’s assessment, while she recognises the importance of specialised knowledge, it is professional judgement which is the hallmark of a learned profession and distinguishes it from mere craft (Gamble, 2010, 15).

A useful contribution to the literature has been attempts at tracing the history of professionalism over different historical periods or phases, for example, Siegrist (1994) and Hargreaves (2000). Siegrist provides an historical overview of the development of the professions in general, emphasising the role of state and government in the regulation of professions, with some reference to teachers or teaching. Hargreaves’ work, on the other hand, relates specifically to teacher professionalism, wherein he identifies four historical phases: the pre-professional age, the age of the autonomous professional, the age of the collegial professional and the post-professional or postmodern age. Although relatively common across Anglophone cultures, Hargreaves notes that, while these phases are not universal, many other nations are now engaging with them. For example, Chile is trying to move more towards being an all-graduate profession (a characteristic of the second age of professionalism), while at the same time experiencing more school-based staff development (a third-age phenomenon) (Hargreaves, 2000, 153). These ages are also believed to resonate with education systems where inequalities in teacher education, teacher competences and working conditions exist, as in the case of South Africa (de Clercq, 2013, 36). A brief description of the four ages follows:

*The pre-professional age:* In this age, teaching was seen as “managerially demanding but technically simple”, one learned to be a teacher through practical apprenticeship. The “good” teacher was the “true teacher” who “devoted herself to her craft”, demonstrated loyalty and gained personal reward through service. Finally, in this age, teacher training and ongoing professional development diminishes in importance as teachers are assumed to control everything

within their individual classroom domain. (Hargreaves, 2000, 156-157)

*The age of the autonomous professional:* Starting from the 1960s, the status and standing of teachers in many countries improved significantly, compared with the pre-professional age. Teacher education became increasingly linked to universities, and teaching became synonymous with a graduate profession. The words “professional” and “autonomy” became inseparable among educators, and over time, many teachers were granted a measure of trust, material reward, security of tenure and professional dignity and discretion in return for satisfying the expectations of the state. (ibid, 158-160)

*The age of the collegial professional:* By the mid to late 1980s, individual teacher autonomy was becoming unsustainable as a way of responding to the increased complexities of schooling. The world in which teachers worked was changing, and increasingly teachers faced the prospect of having to teach in ways they had not been taught themselves. Teaching methods went way beyond simple distinctions between traditional and child-centred methods. Policy dictates to teach in particular ways were been imposed from above. Simultaneously, teachers’ role expanded to embrace consultation and collaborative work with colleagues. Professional development became embedded in the life and work of the school. This shift, however, came with certain dangers, particularly a disconnection with the academic world, which could de-professionalize the knowledge base of teaching and blunt the profession’s critical edge (ibid, 163-166).

*Post-professional or post-modern professional:* With developments in education and in society at the turn of the millennium, there were suggestions that teacher professionalism was entering a new era, the era of postmodernity. Two forces are

seen to be driving the changes: first, new patterns of international economic organization where corporate and commercial power is extensively globalized; and second, the electronic and digital revolution in communications, leading to immediate, globalized availability of information and entertainment. In this context, the fate of teacher professionalism becomes highly fluid, and is constantly debated and contested. One possible outcome of these “struggles” is a new, postmodern professionalism that is broader, more flexible and more democratically inclusive of groups outside teaching and their concerns than its predecessors (*we return to this point later in the discussion*).

Thus, for Hargreaves (2000), teachers’ claims to professionalism (which many practising teachers still lay claim to today) were at its height in the *age of the autonomous professional*, but have since been eroded in subsequent ages. In particular, postmodern developments are releasing a set of assaults on professionalism in universities, medicine, teaching and elsewhere, whereby market principles increasingly determine government policy choices, such that schools (as with other public institutions) are being rationalised, cut-back, made more economically efficient and have to compete with one another for “clients.” Teachers and their professional organisations are seen as obstacles to the marketization of education, and are being restricted in the scope of their decision-making; coaxed into more temporary contracts; and a general lowering of status through “discourses of derision” that hold them responsible for the alleged ills of public or state education. The effect of all this is to return teaching to an amateur, de-professionalised, almost pre-modern craft, wherein teachers have to deal with centralised curricula and testing regimes that have eroded their classroom autonomy and judgement, and subjected them to systems of administration and performance management, through targets, standards, and paper trails of monitoring and accountability (ibid, 167-169). However, as will be highlighted later, the expansion of accountability regimes and tasks for teachers are not all seen as having “de-professionalising” effects.

To sum up thus far, while teaching has historically been cast as a profession and compared and contrasted with law and medicine, the notion of teacher professionalism remains fluid, in spite of recognition that it incorporates the key elements of specialised knowledge (including knowledge of craft), autonomy and service. The increasing role of the state to regulate the “professions”, combined with reduced status, has led to teaching being described as a semi-profession by some, and that as employees accountable to an employer, teachers should be regarded, more appropriately, as workers. Historically, although based pre-dominantly on the experiences of Anglo-Saxon countries, teacher professionalism is seen to have gone through different phases, the latest of which, characterised by the intensification of teachers’ work and accountability, poses fundamental challenges to teachers’ autonomy and the status of teaching as a profession. In the next section, debates relating to teacher unionism and teacher professionalism, and whether teachers are “workers” or “professionals”, are explored further, as is the political and transformative roles of teachers.

### III. THE COMPLEXITY OF TEACHERS’ IDENTITIES

Although the notion of teachers as workers has been juxtaposed against the notion of teachers as professionals, leading to a debate between proponents of teacher professionalism and teacher unionism, this crude division has been refined over time. For many teachers, the appropriate organisational form for teachers seeking professional goals is that of the professional association; this is because professionalism has historically been associated with the notion of the “ideal of service” and with strategies of persuasion and reason rather than force. Traditional unionism, on the other hand, has tended to focus mainly on labour issues, such as salaries and conditions of service and has become synonymous with militant strategies, such as strikes (Govender, 2013). As Sang (2002) observes, the trade union emphasis concentrates on teachers’ economic needs and teacher protection. This emphasis has given rise to the perception that teacher unions are not sufficiently occupied with the professional dimension of teachers’ work. However, a more progressive view of teacher unionism recognises teacher unions focus on broader issues of economic and political contestation with the state

(Hindle & Simpson, 1993; Ozga & Lawn 1981 & Sang, 2002). Indeed, education trade unions, as representatives of members largely within the state sector, “have a built in tendency to clash with the state and thus to be subject to state responses” (Horner et al, 2015: 20).

Ozga and Lawn (1981) have argued for a more flexible approach, which views unionism as an expression of professionalism. They furthermore take into account that the state may use professionalism as an ideological device to control teachers, or the way teachers may use it as a self-defence mechanism in their struggle against marginalisation. The critique has been further refined by the notions of “new realism” and professional or reform unionism, emphasising collaboration rather than confrontation. The notion of “new realism” (attributed to Martin Lawn and Geoff Whitty, cited in Torres *et al* 2000) emphasises better services to members, regaining professional status and developing a long-term vision on educational reform. In like vein, professional or reform unionism urges teachers and their unions to put aside confrontational industrial unionism, along with the too narrow focus on bread-and-butter issues, and instead focus on quality learning for students, acceptance of responsibility for school management and teachers’ professional development (Kerchner and Mitchell 1988; Jacoby and Nitta 2012).

In South Africa, these debates have played out historically as part of the script of South Africa’s struggle for democracy (see Section VI). As Carrim (1997) argues, in the course of negotiations for a democratic South Africa in the early 1990s, there was consensus that teachers in South Africa were both “workers” and “professionals” (also see Hindle & Simpson, 1993 and Govender, 2004). This was argued to be consistent with global trends, for example, Educational International asserts that teachers are workers with professional responsibilities (Carrim, 1997, 164). Teacher identity debates have also been located within the context of teachers’ ambiguous class location, which emphasise teacher’s identification with the working class and/or the middle class based on socio-economic and political factors, such as class, race and gender, that shape teachers’ identities and actions at particular historical conjunctures (Hindle & Simpson, 1993; Olin-Wright, 1979). It is not surprising, therefore, to find teachers describing themselves as having a “hybrid identity” as “professional workers” or “worker professionals”. Similar conceptions of teacher identity have emerged



elsewhere in the world, such as in the USA (Bascia, 2009) and in other African countries, such as Kenya, Uganda and Zambia (Govender, 2009). In Kenya, for example, teachers maintain that there are no distinctions between unionist and professional issues in education, and argue that if students are to have optimal conditions for learning, then teachers must have optimal conditions for teaching (Sang, 2002), while in Uganda in the 1960s, Tiberondwa (1977) has argued that there was no contradiction in combining professionalism with union militancy, and that militancy can be used in defence of professionalism.

Recent research on the role of teachers in peacebuilding, and in conflict and post-conflict contexts, has also contributed to the literature on professionalism. While it draws attention to the complexity of teacher identities in relation to social justice issues, this literature also points to narrow conceptions of teachers and their work. In particular, the notion of “teacher as technocrat” with its focus on performance, and the limited agency afforded to teachers points towards a narrow understanding of professional autonomy that is close to the neo-liberal conception of “new professionalism”, where an emphasis on performativity supplants that of critical reflection and professional judgment (Horner et al, 2015: 18). On the other hand, the notion of “teacher as reflexive professional”, entrusts teachers with the responsibility of delivering education that is relevant and participatory, where the idea of the teacher professional as a reflexive practitioner that reasons, makes judgments and arrives at decisions is stressed. The reflexive teacher plays a central role in educational solutions, including peacebuilding, deemed capable of participating in education decision making at all levels, and recognised for developing professional capacity for reflexivity and judgement to positively impact educational outcomes. This body of research also stresses various transformative roles for teachers, namely, teachers as agents of democratisation, healing, peace and resistance to inequity (ibid: 19-22), not unlike the work of education liberation theorists, such as Paulo Freire and others. Influenced by the work of such theorists, teachers in South Africa in the 1990s stressed their role as “organic intellectuals” (similar in conception to the idea of “reflexive professionals”). Arguably, though, in the current post-modern age, the transformative and reflexive professional roles of teachers have been overtaken by the prescriptions of a globally competitive

education regime, which emphasises performativity and outcomes at the expense of teacher autonomy (see Section IV).

A useful contribution from this body of literature is its focus on teachers and violence, specifically teacher-on-student violence and student-on-teacher violence. In the former, the meting out of corporal punishment to learners is an ongoing concern, especially in developing countries; while sexual abuse of learners by teachers is more widespread; moreover, gender-based violence is an integral feature of post-colonial societies, both in countries at war and those at peace (Horner et al, 2015: 26). In the latter, teachers may experience verbal abuse, threats and intimidation, to actual physical violence by students, and incidents of student on teacher attacks are frequently reported in the media. The authors cite an increase in both physical and verbal attacks on teachers by their students in South Africa, and similar incidents in Jamaica; observing that while student attacks on teachers are prominent in societies with prolonged inequality or post-conflict situations, it is also a global issue with similar incidents reported in England and the United States (ibid: 27). Although no explicit link to professionalism is made by the authors, the effects of these experiences on teachers' conceptions of their professional roles are implicit, and arguably, pose challenges to teachers' self-esteem and in their relationships with the communities they serve. Current research being undertaken by CITE in South Africa lend credibility to such linkages.

One further question relating to understandings of teacher professionalism centres on teachers' political role or whether it is "unprofessional" to be political. In many ways, it is rhetorical to raise questions around whether teachers have a political identity. The very act of teaching, notably, an adult standing before a class of young children for the purpose of informing or educating is by itself a political act. So too is the act of forming teachers' unions to collectively represent teachers on issues relating to salaries and conditions of service in negotiations with employers. Besides this common-sense understanding of the life and work of teachers, there is very little dispute in the literature that teachers are indeed political actors (see Ginsburg *et al*, 1995 and Lawn, 1995).

Lawn (1995, 116) argues that given the nature of teachers' work and their interests, teachers become political actors within "the school as a site of struggle over the nature of teaching", as well as in the "history of the relations between the

teachers and their employers.” He stresses the importance of recognising that teaching in the modern state is organised “within particular forms of production, containing labour processes that determine many aspects of the content, skills, speed, and work relations of teaching” (ibid: 116). Further, that there is an inherent contradiction in teachers’ political role: on the one hand as agents of social reproduction (conveyors of cultural values and beliefs), on the other hand, as “low status operatives in the education system” challenging for a stake in education policymaking, expressed primarily through organised teacher formations (unions or professional associations). This tension in teachers’ work and relations with the state is often manifested in debates relating to professionalism and accountability, “especially following a strike or an outbreak of moral panic or a political crisis” (ibid: 117). This is evident in contemporary South Africa whenever teachers embark on strikes and other forms of protest, such as “work-to-rule” and “stayaways” (Govender, 2013).

The unquestioned political role of teachers and their organisations has been illustrated conclusively in the African context. Many teacher unions played a key role in the struggle for independence of their countries, most in the 1960s, and in the case of South Africa, in the 1980s and early 1990s; many then became influential in the determination of national economic and social policies, while several continue to shape democracy, good governance and economic justice on the continent (Kalusopa *et al*, 2013; Govender 2009). However, teacher unions influence in the education policy arena and their claims to professionalism have been characterised by prolonged struggle. In the wake of the legacy of European colonialism, African teachers have had little say in determining their conditions of service and status as professionals or workers. Thus, although teacher unions in countries, such as Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia were active in the immediate aftermath of independence in the 1960s (Govender, 2009), they have had limited success in determining conditions of service and impacting broader policy matters in subsequent decades. Some have argued that this lack of influence was due to constraints resulting from the emergence of autocratic governments linked to the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programmes by the IMF and the World Bank following balance of payment crises during the 1980s (see Carnoy, 1995; Chisholm, 1999 and Kalusopa *et al*, 2013).

Thus, in many African countries, in the immediate post-independence era,

teachers waged long battles to enhance their economic (salaries and conditions of service) and professional status (especially in the policy making domain) as they fought against unequal teacher-state relations with their origins in the erstwhile colonial regimes (Govender, 2009). In some countries, such as Botswana, genuine attempts were made by the post-independence government to involve teachers and other stakeholders in shaping national policy; whereas in other countries, such as Senegal, the then government, under Leopold Senghor, continued with the same elitist approach to policy making as did its colonial masters (Moulton, 1994). In southern Africa, a UNESCO study found that although education policy formulation was broadly participatory, teachers' participation was low in many countries (Chisholm et al, 1998). Such experiences have led Moulton (1994, 25) to conclude that: "Given this narrowing of participation when real policy issues in relation to resources are decided, the initial participatory policy consultative processes are interpreted by some as a symbolic, ritualised exercise in legitimisation."

In South Africa, black teachers also waged battles with the education authorities for improved salaries and conditions of service, for example in the 1940s and 1950s. It was only in the 1980s, as South Africa's liberation struggle intensified that teachers became radicalised, and demanded to be included in policy making processes. This became part of the struggle for People's Education (PE), and was to lay the basis for a more participatory education dispensation post-1994. However, analysts have pointed out that many of the goals and principles of PE became subverted in the democratic transition, particularly in the area of devolution of school governance to school and community stakeholders, who faced, and continue to face challenges relating to capacity and skills, as well as continuing resource and funding inequities (see, for example, Motala and Vally, 2002: 187-189). Moreover, while the status and conditions of service of South African teachers has improved considerably in the democratic era post-1994, they have struggled to be recognised as autonomous professionals; and although teacher organisations in South Africa are involved in education policy making processes, they have struggled to have significant impact on policy outcomes, due to macro-economic and capacity constraints (see Section VI).

Arguably, the above developments have contributed to the erosion of teachers' professional status in many African countries, and in the post-modern or

post-professional era, teachers' professional autonomy in both developed and developing countries continue to be assailed with the imposition of performance management and accountability regimes that have their roots in an increasingly globalized economy and the explosion of the "information age" (Hargreaves, 2000). The issue of accountability has thus emerged as a key factor shaping contemporary debates on teacher professionalism; while the emphasis on teachers as "reflexive" or "organic" professionals, coupled with teachers' roles as agents of transformation, appear to have receded somewhat.

#### IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

As discussed earlier, scholars have questioned the notion that professionalism is necessarily defined by teachers' absolute autonomy. This view has been reinforced by the increasing accountability regimes that teachers have been subjected to in the post-professional era. In many current educational environments, teaching has become defined as the administering of particular procedures to students, using textbooks, curricula guidelines, standards and frameworks and standardised tests, for example, in the United States with programmes, such as No Child Left Behind and Common Core, and in South Africa, in its outcomes-based curriculum policies and education assessment regimes. This has added an extra layer of accountability to teachers' work as they are forced to undertake additional "reporting" and data gathering. It is a view of teaching that has focused on addressing low learner achievement by training teachers "how to teach" and monitoring implementation more carefully. And as such, the notion of teacher professional judgment has been replaced by pre-specified, highly routinised curricula (Gale & Densmore 2003, 85), or teachers been forced to codify their professional judgements in standardised ways.

Thus, in the USA, teacher's ability to set, for example, a learning objective for a lesson has been replaced by injunctions that compel them to use the Common Core framework of set learning objectives. Similarly, countries that have adopted outcomes-based education reforms have also codified professional judgements as outcomes in standardised ways for teachers to use, as in the case of

South Africa.<sup>2</sup> This may not necessarily lead to the “de-professionalisation” of teachers’ work in all cases because it could extend teachers’ professional discretion in interpreting the curriculum imperatives in new and different ways, as teachers’ professional knowledge of the many guidelines, protocols, codes, procedures and frameworks are deepened.

Lo (2012) asserts that this shift in what teachers should be accountable for is closely tied to changes in educational governance at local levels and what is expected of teachers responsible for educating learners on behalf of the community (Lo in Day, 2012, 13). One issue relating to implementation of increased community accountability is differences in the way teachers and parents/community may interpret their roles and responsibilities, resulting in tensions and breakdown in their relationship, and lack of mutual trust and accountability. Local governance structures in Ghana, such as school management committees (SMCs), for example, interpreted their role as inspection and attempted to supervise teachers’ daily activities. Teachers saw this as infringing on their professional autonomy and agency and felt that the SMC lacked the professional credentials to understand and monitor their work. (Horner et al, 2015) Thus, for many, public school accountability has become about to whom, for what, and by what means teachers should be accountable. This shift has been informed by changes in the educational provisioning of many western countries from the 1990s, where new ways of managing and controlling schools (including decentralisation policies) have been introduced, often in the name of “raising the standards of academic performance”, and increasing the competitiveness of different countries competing in a global economy. This has also come to be applied to many post-colonial countries, such as South Africa, which have subjected themselves to global competitiveness regimes through participation in international assessment surveys, such as TIMSS, PIRLS and others.

An important aspect of the shift in teacher accountability focuses on teacher competence and abilities. As Garet et al (2001: 916) suggest, the success of ambitious education reform initiatives depends largely on the qualifications and

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<sup>2</sup> In South Africa, outcomes-based curriculum for schools was introduced in 2005 as Curriculum 2005, subsequently revised in 2008 as the Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS), and most recently, and currently in use, as the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), 2011.

effectiveness of teachers. This highlights the crucial role of teacher education and professional development in systemic reform initiatives.

In Africa in the 1980s, the status of teachers suffered considerably as a result of structural adjustment programmes, which substantially reduced investments to pre-service training of teachers (but increased investment in continuing teacher education programmes) and dramatically lowered salaries (see, for example, Carnoy, 1995). These financially-driven educational reforms, with their emphasis on austerity measures and cost-cutting, had an overall negative impact on the learning environment in schools and education quality. Structural adjustment programmes forced teachers into becoming “delivery workers”, who were often compelled to moonlight in other jobs in order to survive (ibid, 669). Coupled with the imposition of school fees on increasingly impoverished populations, this had a negative impact on both education quality and access (Nkinyangi, 1991; Caffentzis, 2000; Chisholm and Leyendecker, 2008). The resulting mass protests across the continent against the privatisation of public goods, such as schools and hospitals, by school children, university students, business owners, women’s associations and teachers’ unions, was met by increasingly violent responses by the state, and the escalating political instability and authoritarian nature of governments led to a further erosion of the governance, quality and scope of public goods (Beckman and Jega, 2007).

Today, these and related policy decisions are forcing many governments to review and refocus the quality and relevance of initial and continuing teacher education programmes in confronting “post-professional” or “post-modern” education challenges. Nevertheless, evidence supporting the value of good quality teacher education programmes, both initial and continuing, is quite overwhelming not only in relation to enhancing teacher quality generally, but in the context of teachers’ professional commitments to peacebuilding and social justice goals (ODE, 2013 and Horner et al, 2015)

Thus, as large-scale educational reforms have a profound influence on how teacher professionalism and accountability is currently understood, processes within schools have accentuated issues of choice, standards, and effective implementation (Lo in Day 2012, 14). These greater demands for particular kinds of accountability and transparency have put increasing pressure on schools and teachers to perform in accordance with specified benchmarks, evident in

performance management and teacher appraisal systems (Sachs & Mockler, in Day 2012, 33). This shift in accountability and performance cultures has focused on “habitualising” teachers’ work according to the production of preferred outcomes and determined performance indicators, and discouraged teacher creativity and attempts to play social justice roles (Lo in Day 2012, 14), thereby undermining teachers’ traditional claims to professionalism (see earlier discussion on professionalism). In the UK, for example, teachers have to answer to managers in terms of outcomes and performance indicators for “social justice” rather than in terms of “playing a social justice role” as teachers. This can be seen in demands placed on teachers for evidence of differentiated instruction in lesson planning, analysis of “low socio-economic” student test-scores, evidence of incorporating special needs into lesson planning and equal opportunity learning provision; resulting in the codification and habitualising of teachers’ work. Recent trends in educational accountability also point to a widespread adaptation of contractual accountability in school settings (Lo, in Day 2012, 14) and a continual auditing culture that has brought in a climate of surveillance in schools. In such an environment, teachers have been pressured to comply with the dictates of a range of externally designed performance measures (Sachs 2001; Ball 2003; Perryman 2006, 2009), much like the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) in South Africa. Thus, teachers in South Africa, as is the case elsewhere in the world, are increasingly under pressure to abide by professional standards and performance management systems.

Another area of teacher accountability arises in the implementation of teachers’ codes of conduct (CoC). Horner et al (2015) suggest that there is an overlap between a top-down code of conduct which is used as teacher surveillance and promotes an accountability/performativity culture, and the discourses of new professionalism and the teacher as technocrat notion; while a supportive code shows synergy with the teacher as a reflexive professional. As such, a top-down enforced CoC serving a watchdog function, while legitimised as a means of protecting a teacher’s professional status, may actually diminish it. The authors argue that in this rendition, the term “professional” is invoked as a disciplinary tool, and is used to compel conformity to regulation rather than autonomy. However, if the autonomy and self-governance of teachers are recognised, as in



the conception of teachers as reflexive professionals, their participation in the development of CoC would help to enhance the teaching community's professional reflexivity and judgment.

As noted above, many of these recent trends and shifts in how teacher professionalism and accountability are understood and practised, alongside a strong focus on learner outcomes, have arguably ushered in an attitude of compliance. This is in stark contrast to notions of “responsibility”, “reflexivity” and autonomy which are associated with ideas of professionalism, such as the degree of discretion teachers have and a sense of professional ethos and its affordances. Many of these questions have emerged in writings on the labour process of teaching. Smyth (2001), for example, reporting on the Australian experience, outlines several key issues relating to teachers' work. These include the organisation of teachers' work and the workplace context, teachers' networks (formal and informal), division of labour both by function and gender, role of management and supervision, performance appraisal and efficiency, strategies of compliance and resistance, and job design and quality control in educational work (Smyth, 2001, 5).

A crucial point made by Smyth (2001, 6-7) is the importance of recognising how the structure of schooling and the organisation of schoolwork (the labour process) inhibit the autonomy of teachers, especially the influence of forces outside of schools. This can be seen in moves to expand national testing regimes and performance appraisal measures – in South Africa, in the form of Annual National Assessments (ANAs) for learners and calls for periodic testing of teachers' competence and subject knowledge (NPC, 2011, 284); how the increasing pace and intensity of teachers work, that is, the number of classes they teach, the students per class and the scheduling of those classes, are all dictated by external budgetary constraints and the emphasis on “value-for-money”; moreover, many of the routines imposed on teachers, such as prescribed curriculum frameworks, adherence to national and provincial policies, recommended teaching packages, and time on task regulations, all have their origins outside the classroom, and have a striking resemblance to the constraints and limits around the nature of work in industry and workers generally (Smith, 2001, 6-7). Smyth argues that to speak of teachers' professional autonomy in the context of such constraints which are largely ignored by policy makers and government, is a

contradiction in terms. In practice, therefore, the increasing emphasis on teacher accountability internationally and an escalation in work-based routines and external management directives, has led to an erosion of teacher autonomy, and is viewed as an assault against teacher professionalism. It is in this context that the role of teacher unions, and the notion of teacher unionism, needs to be understood, as increasingly, teacher unionism is seen by teachers as a defence mechanism against external control (Lawn, 1995; Govender, 2013).

Significantly, although a number of the issues discussed above apply to teachers globally, there appears to be differences between teachers and teachers' unions in the North and South. Teachers' unions in the "South" tend to have a more confrontational attitude towards challenging neoliberal educational reform which can extend to their social role and responsibility to socialize children into challenging the unequal status-quo (Vongalis-Macrow, 2004; cited in Horner et al, 2015). This might reflect the fact that neoliberal reforms have affected North and South in different ways and to different extremes, increasing inequality both within countries, but also between North and South (Horner et al, 2015). Thus, in the present geopolitical conjuncture, given expanding demands on teachers working in peacebuilding and heightened social justice contexts, for example, in the Middle East and elsewhere, and in societies characterised by high levels of inequality and inequity, teachers' roles as transformative and reflexive agents should have greater relevance, and, as such, should be inserted more deeply in contemporary conceptions of professionalism and accountability.

## V. PROFESSIONALISM AND ACCOUNTABILITY: COMPETING DISCOURSES OR TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN?

As can be seen from the above, competing and diverse views on the nature of teacher professionalism have emerged, particularly given the privatisation of public goods in African countries under externally-imposed structural adjustment programmes, and international trends towards eroding teachers' autonomy by increasing bureaucratic accountability measures. This section explores dominant discourses on teacher professionalism in order to consider the ways in which different teacher identities are emerging. Some analysts suggest that two dominant

competing discourses are currently shaping teachers' professional identity: managerial and democratic professionalism (for example, Sachs, 2001 and Whitty, 2006), similar to the two approaches to teaching that Hargreaves and Fullan (2013) outline, namely, the "business capital" and "professional capital" approaches.

Managerial professionalism has emerged as the more dominant of the two discourses due to organisational change factors, accountability imperatives for teachers (discussed above) and the drive for more efficient systems, and given its global currency. The values underlying managerialism, namely that management is inherently good, managers should have autonomy to manage and other groups should accept their autonomy, are regarded as universal; and are to be found in state education bureaucracies and schools (Sachs, 2001:151). Echoing this efficiency and management refrain, the "business capital approach" based on a market-driven education system, views teaching as "technically simple", where technology can replace teachers, and which doesn't require rigorous training or extensive practice in schools (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2013). This dominant view of professionalism is seen to be closely linked to decentralisation policies and accountability regimes for teachers in a highly competitive and global world order. As Sachs (ibid: 152) elaborates:

Where devolution and decentralisation have been at the core of reform agendas, teachers are placed in a long line of authority in terms of their accountability for reaching measurable outcomes that stretches through the principal, to the district/regional office, to the central office.

Democratic professionalism, on the other hand, is viewed as an alternative to state control, and emphasises the building of partnerships between teachers and excluded constituencies, such as students and community groups, on whose behalf decisions have historically been made by the professions or the state (Sachs 2001; Whitty, 2006). In similar ways, the notion of "professional capital" stresses technical knowledge, high levels of education, strong practice within schools, and continuous improvement over time that is undertaken collaboratively, and that calls for the development of wise judgment (encapsulated in the notion of

“reflexive” or “organic” professional). Three kinds of capital underpin the vision of professional capital: human capital (the talent of individuals); social capital (the collaborative power of the group); and decisional capital (the wisdom and expertise to make sound judgments about learners that are cultivated over many years) (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2013). Democratic professionalism thus seeks to go beyond traditional professionalism which its critics regard as an outdated, romanticised view of teacher autonomy and self-regulation. In the wake of these competing discourses, according to Sachs (2001), a new model of professional identity for teachers may be discerned: “entrepreneurial” and “activist”. The entrepreneurial professional typically identifies with the efficient, responsible and accountable version of service, thus feeding into the current emphasis on teacher accountability systems that utilise performance indicators and inspections for centralised control of teachers’ roles (Sachs 2001:156). The activist professional, on the other hand, is concerned with broader social and political agendas aimed at confronting the changing nature of teaching and teachers’ roles in the era of managerialism and competition, and, especially in an era of heightened conflict and social fragility. Sachs (2001, 158-160) suggests that this can be achieved largely through communities of practice, involving teachers, bureaucrats, unions, academics and others in a shared, rather than, an adversarial endeavour. This is reminiscent of Whitty and Lawn’s notions of “professional unionism” and “new realism”; as well as Hargreaves’ notion of the post-professional or post-modern professional. Thus, what emerges in the literature is that the notion of teachers as professionals changes as the contexts in which teachers work change, leading to new and evolving forms of teacher professional identities.

While Whitty (2006) agrees with most of the emerging discourse, he argues that not all education reforms will necessarily lead to the de-skilling and de-professionalisation of teachers, as suggested by Sachs and others. He claims that some of the new wave of education reforms in the UK, for example, have the potential to extend, rather than restrict the professionalism of teachers (similar to the possible effects of the Common Core curriculum framework in the USA discussed earlier). He suggests that reforms, such as expanding the role of teaching assistants and enhancing the role of students in decision-making, are not necessarily examples of de-professionalisation, but are, more aptly, attempts at *re-professionalisation*. (ibid: 11-12). Both Whitty (2006) and Sachs (2001),

nevertheless, propose that the democratisation of professionalism should be adopted as an alternative to both the traditional and the managerialist professional projects currently promulgated by governments. A democratic professionalism would seek to demystify professional work and build alliances between teachers and other members of the school workforce, such as teaching assistants, and external stakeholders, especially students, parents and members of the wider community. It thus encourages the development of collaborative cultures with teachers at the core, extending their responsibilities beyond the classroom, to include the school, other students, the wider educational system and to a broader social agenda. Echoing Sachs, Whitty (2006, 14) stresses that “under democratic professionalism, this broader agenda becomes part and parcel of the professional agenda rather than being counterposed to it”. However, in highly stressful social and political contexts, teachers’ work and professional commitments could be stretched, leading to teacher burnout and related problems. This, in turn, would require greater investments in relevant teacher professional development programmes, and would strain educational resources. Paradoxically, this view of democratic professionalism may be seen as a means to restoring teachers’ self-esteem and community status, and ultimately, turning to notions of traditional teacher professionalism, wherein the “ideal of service” rhetoric is emphasised.

Arguably, the push towards democratic professionalism may be associated with the broken “social contract” between teachers and the state, their communities and schools. Some scholars suggest that in many African countries, for example, teachers and their unions are too close to government, a situation that seriously compromises their independence and influence (Samoff, 2004, cited in Govender, 2009). This results in teachers serving more as agents of the state, as in Malawi, where they portray the state’s agenda to be a “modern state”, and are expected to advance the state’s development and legitimisation project (Fuller, 1991, cited in Welmond, 1999); or in the case of Benin where the state-teacher pact, by offering opportunities for advancement within the state hierarchy (even through political allegiance), the state is able to rupture and deflect teachers’ political potential, thereby ensuring their isolation from other parts of society (Welmond, 1999: 173).

## VI. A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

The evolution of understandings and experiences of teacher professionalism and accountability in South Africa has mirrored in many ways developments elsewhere in the world. However, as is the case for individual countries, South Africa's experience is shaped by its specific history and context. In the post-1994 era, while on the one hand, teacher professionalism and accountability issues have been significantly shaped by the legitimisation of teacher unionism, resulting in enormous power being acquired by teacher unions; on the other hand, teachers are being exhorted by government and education stakeholders to assume traditional professional roles that emphasise service and loyalty, and which simultaneously subject teachers to increased performance management and assessment regimes in pursuit of quality education. Teacher quality is in the spotlight, with serious questions being asked about teacher knowledge and competence. However, teacher professionalism has a long history in South Africa, and has, for much of that history, shaped teachers' identity and status. It can also be argued that at no other time than the present, have issues relating to teacher accountability been so pervasive.

### *I. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: THE IMPACT OF COLONIAL LEGACIES, AS WELL AS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FORCES ON EDUCATION*

In South Africa, mission education, linked to the colonial agenda of converting "natives" to Christianity and "civilised" people, provided the context in which African education evolved, and which set the tone for the emergent teaching profession (Vilardo, 1996). According to Vilardo (ibid), in exploring the emergence of a Christianised African middle class (*amaKholwa*) in South Africa in the 19th century,

Missionaries played a central part in the creation of new social and cultural spaces in which the disaffected in African societies could construct new lives...Christianity and education opened the door to a more privileged incorporation into the colonial

economy and society, with educated Africans gaining employment as clerks, interpreters, clergymen, and especially teachers. The symbolic importance of education among the [ama]Kholwa, and the increasing demand for education by all Africans, assured that teachers would be both highly sought after and highly respected (xi-xiii).

Indeed, the literal translation of the term for Christian converts, *amaKholwa*, is “those who are schooled”, and indicates the close association between Western education, Christianity and colonial rule. Similarly, Adhikari (1993), focussing on the history of the Teachers League of South Africa in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (1913-1940), suggests that the assimilation of Coloured teachers in the Cape, was influenced by Christian mission schools towards a pro-white and Western middle-class identity. The author describes how Coloured teachers’ “moral and religious motives lay partly behind the League’s de-emphasis of its quest for better remuneration”, and “since all League members were products of mission schooling which emphasized the spiritual value of education, they held service to the community and selflessness as prime values” (ibid: 84). However, as the nature of the colonial economy changed, and people’s access to land and the means of production became increasingly circumscribed, the issue of better wages was prioritised (see Vilardo, 1996; White, 1996). As Vilardo (1996, xv-xvi) argues, “poor pay and service conditions increasingly forced teachers back upon the African working class in terms of their living conditions. The radicalization of teachers’ politics in the 1940’s and 1950’s arose from these experiences and took the form of demands for equal service conditions and greater opportunities for professional advancement within African educational institutions.” With the emergence of African nationalism and demands for equality and social justice, teachers’ activism during this period expanded to include political demands as well (Hyslop, 1999; Vilardo, 1996).

## *II. 1960s-1980s*

During the 1960s western countries witnessed the emergence of behavioural science philosophy, and in the realm of education studies, the role of teachers was

seen largely “as instrumental technicians”, serving the needs of the education state authorities. In the case of South Africa, a strong intellectual tradition of positivism provided the theoretical foundations for both the colonial and the apartheid state, in terms of the “scientific” treatment of social groups that were thought to be in need of social engineering (Allsobrook, 2014). In the realm of education, teachers were typically construed as technicians, and the conceptualisation of a “good teacher” was delineated in order to satisfy the ideological and political goals of apartheid education (Samuel, 2005:3).

In line with the logic of apartheid, racially-based teachers’ formations were established: the African Teachers’ Association of South Africa, the Indian Teachers’ Association of South Africa, the Coloured Union of Teachers’ Association of South Africa and the white Teachers’ Federal Council. These organisations espoused a traditional professional approach favoured by the state, relying primarily on strategies of consultation and persuasion, while eschewing militant and political action (Govender, 2013:7). In this context, teachers were forced into acquiescence and loyalty to the apartheid state. Moreover, as Vilardo (1996, xvi-xvii) argues, black (African) teachers’ turn to conservatism was not only a result of the apartheid government’s repressive policies, but equally a function of teachers’ middle-class and professional aspirations:

The realization of teachers’ parochial institutional interests in professional advancement now [1950s-1960s] served to reinforce the apartheid principle of separate development by entrenching African teachers in the administrative structures of Bantu Education. As more and more African teachers advanced to positions of authority within the Bantu Education system teachers’ organizations increasingly reflected the concerns of this emerging bureaucratic elite, a fact that would have profound implications for teachers’ politics in the 1980’s.

In the 1980s, with the intensification of the political struggle for liberation, several progressive teacher unions emerged. Led by the National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA), they adopted a strong unionist approach in their dealings with the apartheid education establishment. Their membership comprised



predominantly younger teachers, who had become disgruntled with the established professional associations which they regarded as being too close to the apartheid education establishment, and who saw themselves as “activist” teachers fighting for democracy (Govender, 2004).

A serious schism emerged between the new generation of progressive unions and the older, professional associations. The latter prioritised their commitment to the interests of the “child” and personal advancement, while the former regarded themselves as “workers” and identified with the struggle of the working class (Govender, 2013:8). As Samuel (2005:4) asserts, the 1980s saw a turnaround, with the emergence of the worker identity of teachers and the assertion of teachers’ agency; moreover, education research focussed on the complexity of teaching and learning (teaching as craft or in Young and Muller’s (2014) terminology “knowledge how”), beyond superficial mastery of subject knowledge. The traditional notion of professionalism, which emphasised teacher loyalty and service, came under serious attack. A new form of teacher accountability, wherein teachers declared allegiance to their unions, not the government, took root, and became an important marker of teacher identity well into the 2000s.

Developments in the Western Cape mirrored developments elsewhere in the country, but also reflected its own provincial dynamics. As Kihn (2002, 325) asserts,

The shift in ideas regarding the nature of teacher professionalism facilitated the birth of new teacher organisations. Although the dissolution of the traditional groupings and beliefs remained partial, and no absolute transformation took place, there occurred an ideological contest for the meaning of professionalism, which illustrated the buoyancy of new teacher identities and, ultimately, resiliency of the old.

The context of these changes was the 1976 and 1980s school boycotts, particularly in Coloured schools, which constitute a large proportion of the Western Cape schooling system. In the context of the liberation struggle, the class

location of teachers constituted a key point of departure for emergent teacher unions, such as the Western Cape Teachers' Union (WECTU), and as Kihn points out, class location was central to the ideological conflict, as "emergent and traditional professionalisms made a distinction between workers and professionals. For the traditional associations [such as the Coloured Teachers Professional Association (CTPA)], teacher professionalism implied an aspiration to middle class status' (ibid, 330). Eventually, WECTU would disband and merge into the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), with strong claims to unionism; while CTPA's membership would be subsumed predominantly within the professional teachers' movement in the country.

Kihn (ibid, 334) claims that a "new professionalism" had emerged in the Western Cape, with an overly political understanding of society and teachers' work, one in which non-racialism, non-sexism and teachers' class location became central. However, Kihn concludes that while the "new professionalism" challenged and influenced the older professionalism, "both continue to co-exist in the dynamic environment of schooling in post-apartheid South Africa."<sup>3</sup>

### *III. 1990s-2000s*

An important development post-1994 was the ANC government's recognition of teacher unionism as part of a democratic (inclusive) labour dispensation, thereby guaranteeing teachers' rights as workers. This was significant because the erstwhile apartheid government had only recognised membership of teachers to professional associations and not unions. Teachers' rights to collective bargaining and strike action became enshrined in law, with the establishment of the Education Labour Relations Council. At the same time, the new government invoked the notion of teacher professionalism through the establishment of the South African Council for Educators (SACE), which was responsible for the professional registration of teachers and developing a professional code of

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<sup>3</sup> Also, see Hyslop, J. 1990. "Teacher resistance in African education from the 1940s to the 1980s." In: Nkomo, M. (Ed). *Pedagogy of domination: Towards a democratic education in South Africa*. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc. and Govender, L.V. 2009. *Teachers' Participation in Policy Making: The Case of the South African Schools Act*. PhD dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, for more detailed analyses on teacher politics and professionalism during this period.

conduct (Govender, 2013:8-9). In the process, two national organisations were formed, the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), consisting of the progressive teacher unions (October, 1990); and the National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA) which became the home of the racially based conservative teacher organisations (August 1991).<sup>4</sup>

The new, democratic government in South Africa invoked traditional notions of teacher professionalism in its attempts to promote teacher obedience and loyalty. While teachers' identity became associated with new governance arrangements and agents of change as part of democratic transformation of education post-1994, teachers were required to take on new responsibilities, reflected in various policy documents, such as the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000). The escalating demands on teachers "reflects back to an earlier era in which teachers were being framed to become technicians of the State agenda, albeit in a new State with a new transformatory agenda" (Samuel, 2005: 5). Thus, increasingly, teachers are being co-opted to develop accountability to their employer authority (Samuel, 2005:7; Bascia, 2009:482). In South Africa, this has emerged in two key areas, namely, teacher appraisal and assessment policies.

Teacher appraisal and evaluation policy in South Africa has been hugely contested, as part of the struggles against apartheid education in the 1980s, and again as part of teachers' struggles to have a democratic system of appraisal post-1994 (Chisholm, 1999). Following protracted negotiations between unions and policymakers, the developmental appraisal system (DAS) was approved in 1999, and in 2001 the policy on Whole School Evaluation (WSE) was legislated, with emphasis on the school as a whole rather than on individual performance. Eventually, in 2003, in an attempt to integrate DAS and WSE, the integrated quality management system (IQMS) was enacted (Sayed and Kanjee, 2013, 21). However, as Sayed and Kanjee (ibid) suggest, there is still much confusion about the status of these various policies and how they connect to each other. To this day, therefore, teacher appraisal and evaluation policy, which in essence is at the heart of teacher accountability measures, remains obfuscated, and potentially an area of ongoing contestation between teacher unions and the government.

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<sup>4</sup> With the exception of TASA, the Indian teachers' association, which disbanded and encouraged its members to join SADTU.

Teacher accountability is also emerging as an issue in the context of the learner assessment policy pathway, which emerged initially with the 2007 Assessment Policy and again with the release of the education department's Action Plan 2014 (Kanjee and Sayed, 2013a). The authors note that the 2012 version of the Action Plan argued for strengthening teacher accountability by using a points system to promote and monitor teacher development. Moreover, the assessment policies being proposed, by favouring formal testing over informal assessment, lends itself to promoting a discourse of reporting and recording as opposed to a discourse of assessment for improving learning and teaching. (ibid: 465) It thus potentially feeds into the discourse of managerial professionalism as teachers will be required to maintain portfolios of work on their assessment practices. Arguably, this may be seen as an alternative or “backdoor” ploy to invoke teacher accountability measures given the difficulties and challenges relating to teacher appraisal and performance management policies discussed above.

School assessment policies could thus emerge as another site of contestation between teacher organisations and government, with potential future challenges for teachers' professional growth. As highlighted in the context of enhancing education quality, attempts to intensify teacher accountability using a managerial professionalism approach can be counter-productive, as it “sees the rise of teacher unions as a stumbling block to effective schools” (Kanjee and Sayed, 2013b: 375).

Alongside new teacher accountability and performance management measures, teacher unionism and the issue of political alignment has been questioned in recent years. In particular, SADTU, representing about two-thirds of teachers, has been singled out for its inability to transform into a professional union and is regularly criticised in the media by members of the public and the main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, for pursuing a narrow economic-based agenda linked to political patronage, given its alliance with the ANC ruling party. NAPTOSA, on the other hand, given its continued emphasis on teacher “professionalism” and prioritising the interests of learners, has found favour with government and its accountability regimes (Govender, 2013:6). Thus, in the post-1994 era, while, teacher professionalism and accountability issues are being influenced to a large extent by competing discourses of managerial and

democratic professionalism, in the South African context, challenges relating to teacher unionism and political alignment, historically grounded, also persist.

#### *IV. CURRENT TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM AND ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES*

In the present conjuncture, the performance of South Africa's education system has come under the spotlight, amidst concerns over poor learner achievement. Likewise, teachers' competence has been questioned, given failed reconstruction efforts to enhance teacher education and development (OECD, 2008) and research indicating teachers' poor subject knowledge (Khosa, 2010; Taylor, 2011). Teachers' subject knowledge in Mathematics is concerning, especially in rural and poor areas (Spaull, 2013, 5). This has led to increased focus on teacher quality issues by academics and researchers. Spaull (2013, 24), for example, in defining teacher quality in the South African context highlights the following four attributes: some requisite level of *professionalism* (values), the *inclination* to teach (attitudes and desires), the *ability* to teach (knowledge, skills and pedagogy), and therefore, the *competence* to teach (imparting and instilling the knowledge, skills and values pupils should be acquiring at school). In this context, lack of teachers' professional commitment as a contributing factor to South Africa's ailing education system has been highlighted.

Thus, there is increasing opposition to the notion that teachers be regarded as independent professionals, and increasingly the state as employer is demanding that teachers be held accountable. As Samuel (2005, 7) asserts:

Teachers are being co-opted to develop accountability to their employer authority. Accountability to being members of a profession, holding up the ideals of the teaching profession, recedes in this context. Conservative views about the role of the teacher as a "semi-autonomous professional" are being rallied amongst circles who construct teachers as inadequate. Teachers are interpreted as "service workers" with responsibility to deliver the goals of State's "transformation" agenda.

More recently, and in similar vein, with the establishment of the National Planning Commission (NPC), a strong emphasis on teacher professionalism and accountability can be seen:

We should aspire to a future where teachers are recognised for their efforts and professionalism...Teacher remuneration should be linked to their performance while taking into account mitigating factors such as the school environment and the socio-economic status of learners. (NPC, 2011)

In this view, professionalism is a privilege that teachers have to earn; it is not something that can be claimed as a right. Arising from this, the view that incompetent teachers are largely to blame for poor education quality in South Africa warrants careful consideration, especially recognition of the need to enhance teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical skills through improved teacher education preparation. Samuel (2005:11) contends that teachers in South Africa have been "products of a teacher-training model which valued teachers as transmitters of prepackaged knowledge", leading to a dependency on state-provided continuing teacher professional development (CTPD) programmes. Thus, many teachers view themselves as incapable of taking responsibility for their own professional growth. This has resulted in pressure being exerted on teacher unions to play a more active role in continuous teacher professional development, as well as on statutory bodies, such as SACE. SADTU, for example, has in recent years given greater attention to professional development of teachers with the launch of the Curtis Nkondo Professional Development Institute, named after one of its founding leaders, as have NAPTOSA and other smaller teacher organisations (Govender, 2013).

Besides the intensification of teacher accountability to the state/employer, accountability to their unions and professional associations continue to feature strongly in the minds of teachers. While teachers' accountability to their professional associations, such as NAPTOSA, is consistent with government exhortations, teachers' accountability to their unions, which stresses teachers' worker identity (in the case of SADTU), underlines the contested nature of state-union relations in education. This manifests itself both in the economic sphere,

such as salary negotiations, as well as in the professional sphere, such as teacher appraisal and evaluation as noted above. More recently, teachers' accountability to their unions have emerged in other policy areas, for example, novice under-qualified or temporary teachers turn to their unions to help secure more permanent positions, resulting in the identity of these teachers being directed towards survival rather than towards the teaching profession itself (Samuel, 2005: 10).

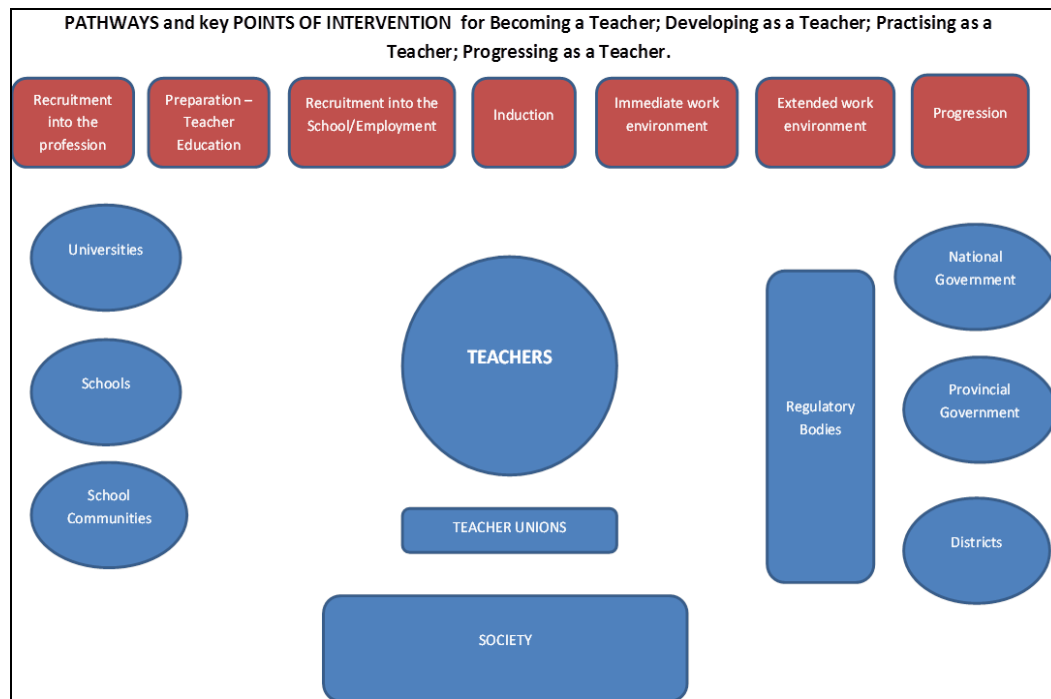
#### *V. THE STATE OF THE TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM PROJECT IN SOUTH AFRICA*

The project of teacher professionalism in South Africa is arguably in need of urgent attention. This has been recognised at the highest level of government, with the involvement of teacher organisations and other stakeholders. In this regard, following on the work of the NPC, the Human Resource Development Council of South Africa (HRDC) located in the office of the Deputy President, has been tasked to take up the country's main education challenges. In March 2011, the HRDC established the Foundational Learning Technical Task Team (FLTTT), to focus on four key areas aligned to the National Development Plan (NDP) education priorities, namely, early childhood development; teacher performance improvement and standardisation; school management and leadership and district management and leadership. Of these, the FLTTT identified teacher performance improvement and standardisation, and district management and leadership as the two leverage points with the most potential for impact. As such, teacher professional development became a core research focus for the HRDC. While the project initially focussed on subject expertise of teachers and key promotion posts, in the context of building a professional teaching civil service, it soon became clear to the FLTTT that the project should encompass more broadly issues of teacher professionalisation, taking into account the current context of teacher professionalism in South Africa. (HRDC, 2014:7-8) Similarly, the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), launched in 2012, comprising government, business, labour and civil society, has prioritised the "professionalisation of teachers" as one of its themes (NECT brochure, undated).

The HRDC study focuses on analysing the trajectory of teacher professionalism in South Africa; in doing so, it proposes a conceptual framework

for mapping pathways and key points of intervention for becoming a teacher (teacher education), developing as a teacher (continuing professional development), practising as a teacher (pedagogical abilities), and progressing as a teacher (teacher appraisal and accountability) (See Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONALISATION



Source: HRDC (2014)

In concluding this recent study, the HRDC makes recommendations in the following areas:

**Policy Implementation:** the strong policy frameworks for teacher development and professionalisation that are in place *must be allowed to gain traction and not be changed for several years*;

**Advocacy:** Advocacy has a critical role to play in changing perceptions about teacher professionalism amongst key actors and in broader society. *This includes using an evidence base*



*to portray a realistic image of teachers and teaching in the country and conveying a more nuanced understanding of the context and challenges of teaching;*

**Quality and standards development:** Teachers must have access to both quality ITE and CPTD opportunities. Improving the quality of teacher development programmes and the responsiveness to identified problems is critical (e.g. practice component of teaching degrees, knowledge authority, subject expertise, understanding school realities etc.);

**Induction of teachers:** Recognising that the formal induction of teachers is a crucial missing link in the pathways from completing formal training to becoming a professional teacher in South Africa, a strong induction period is needed for new teachers not currently supported adequately to make sense of teaching life.; and

**Research:** *Successful implementation of the professionalisation project largely depends on evidence-based decision making.* While recognising a significant increase in basic and higher education research in recent years, the following were highlighted as ongoing areas of research need:

- Understanding supply, demand, and absorption/placement of teachers;
- *Investigating performance and incentives for teacher professionalism;*
- Exploring how teacher educators' understanding of schooling contexts influences curriculum development;
- Investigating perceptions of young people towards teaching and its take up;
- Exploring existing models of induction and how these can be used for learning;
- Setting up platforms for teachers to share research on their practice; and

- Evaluating the implementation and impact of new professionalisation-related programmes as well as encouraging the continuous evaluation of teacher education programmes. (HRDC, 2014: 55-59; own emphasis)

Elsewhere, education stakeholders, including teacher unions, civil society organs and academics have interrogated the role of SACE, with some calling for a review of its mandate to enhance self-regulation, and to make SACE the chief custodian of the teaching profession in South Africa.<sup>5</sup> De Clercq (2013), while concurring with the view that SACE has not fulfilled much of its potential, suggests that there is much that independent professional associations can contribute. She argues that the domination and shaping of the construction of teacher professionalisation and professionalism by education departments and teacher unions in the post-1994 period has closed off alternative interventions by more independent functioning associations, such as subject-based professional bodies. These associations, such as the Association of Mathematics Educators of South Africa (AMESA), with their focus on “better professional practices, mindset and long-term interests among teachers, can play a leading role in making teachers responsible, motivated and committed to quality education for all” (ibid: 49). While this proposal warrants consideration, it should be noted that subject or discipline focussed associations have traditionally been concerned with enhancing teachers’ subject and pedagogical knowledge and practices; whether such associations are able to assume the mantle of promoting teacher professionalism more broadly, and whether they will be willing to do so, are questionable. An important point stressed by de Clercq (2013), nevertheless, is that in the post-1994 dispensation in South Africa, little attention has been paid to the behavioural and attitudinal aspects of teacher professionalism; this has given rise to problems in the level and quality of teachers’ work and attitudes. This is consistent with the views of CITE and others, who are engaged in empirical work that seeks to investigate teachers’

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<sup>5</sup> Report of the Teacher Professionalism and Accountability Seminar, co-hosted by CITE, NECT and SACE, 18 June 2015.

personal experiences of professionalism and professionalisation in diverse contexts, including those that are socially and politically challenging.

It is thus clear from a government perspective, and, increasingly by education stakeholders and the research community, that South Africa's teacher professionalisation project has some way to go to lay claims to any notion of teacher professionalism, given ongoing challenges relating to teacher knowledge, competency, regulation of the profession and public perceptions regarding the quality of teachers. Many would agree with this position, and go even further, as does Gamble (2010, 32) who concludes:

...that the notion of teacher professionalism in South Africa has a long way to go before it shifts from ideology to reality. Based on the available evidence one cannot even argue conclusively that current practices merit being recognised as those of a semi-profession.

She goes on to argue that while it is tempting to yearn for the days of teaching as craft and notions of "the good teacher", South Africa, like other countries, is "irrevocably on a modernising road", founded on "social relations of an exchange of labour that is based on specialised functions and therefore on the mutual dependence of individuals on one another". Thus, teachers are no exception and the quest has to be (citing Bell, 1981) to produce "professional experts capable of effective teaching" (ibid, 32). In order to achieve this, South Africa in its quest for teacher professionalism must ensure that "all its teachers are capable of exercising their authority on the basis of systematic knowledge about their teaching subjects and their rationale for teaching as well as being able to translate this into effective teaching practice that inspire, motivate and compel young people to strive to achieve their academic best." It is this complex understanding of professionalism in general and of teacher professionalism in particular that she advises South Africa to embrace. (Gamble, 2010, 33)

## *VI. TAKING STOCK AND FUTURE POSSIBILITIES*

How are teachers and their organisations responding to all of this, and what possibilities lie ahead? In the face of a mounting external accountability regime, teacher unions have dug their heels in, and invoked both militant and professional strategies in defence of their autonomy (Govender, 2013), and in demanding a stake in policy making, notably in relation to teacher appraisal. Thus, in the current conjuncture, although teachers' struggles around professionalism and democratic policy making are reminiscent of the pre-1994 era in South Africa, it is also a consequence of post-apartheid government's management of relations between teacher unions and the state: legislative accommodation of teacher unionism and inclusive policy making (although of a selective nature), on the one hand, and institutional and work-based accountability of teacher professionalism on the other.

This has also impacted notions of teacher identity, with teachers continuing to claim both professional, as in "entrepreneurial", and "worker" identities, whereby their union affiliation is emphasised. Many teachers, especially those affiliated to SADTU, claim a hybrid identity, that of the "professional worker". Teachers belonging to NAPTOSA and other associations such as the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU) and National Teachers Union (NATU), while clinging to their "professional" roots, have been forced into embracing unionism through legislation and as part of efforts to embrace education transformation post-1994 (see, for example, Govender, 2009). SADTU, moreover, continues to invoke its alliance with the largest workers' federation, COSATU, in defence of its autonomy, which is sometimes used against the union to undermine its claims to professionalism.

Moreover, in recent years, anti-teacher union sentiments have increased, flowing from public criticism that teacher unions are intent on controlling the education sector in South Africa, which have led many to question the role of teacher unions in society. In particular, SADTU, as the largest union in the country, has been criticised for undermining democratic and fair practices, which are impacting negatively on education provision. During 2015, a commission appointed by the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, to investigate a "cash-for-jobs" scandal, found that members of SADTU were engaged in

unprofessional and unethical practices in the appointment of educators to key management posts at schools and in provincial education departments (Masondo, 2015; Masondo and Harper, 2015). Arising from the commission's findings, SADTU has been accused of resisting attempts to improve education services and "not [being] interested in the education of our children" (Tlhabi, 2016:18). These developments have undermined teacher unions' claims to "professional unionism" or "democratic professionalism", and reflect adversely on teachers' claims to be regarded as "agents of transformation" or "reflexive professionals".

Indeed, the notions of the teacher as "activist" and "organic intellectual", which emerged in the 1980s and deepened in the 1990s, have since been considerably eroded, as teachers are presented as incompetent and in need of constant supervision, all in the face of rising accountability measures. Teacher autonomy has thus been seriously undermined in the process, and teacher unions and professional associations, together with other constituencies are being called upon to help address the "crisis" in education by enforcing discipline among its members, rooting out corrupt practices and contributing to professional development efforts. The launching of the NECT (see above) to support the National Development Plan and the Education Sector Plan is widely acknowledged as essential to improving education provision. Whether this and similar initiatives, founded on notions of "democratic professionalism", will be effective in realising South Africa's professionalisation project, remains to be seen. And, importantly, although organised teachers' formations are engaged, little is known about ordinary teachers' views on teacher professionalism and accountability and related developments.

## PART TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGIES OF LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

### I. INTRODUCTION

This review focuses on longitudinal studies in education. We find that such studies have tended to focus on learner assessment and school to work transition issues, with limited focus on teachers. This is evident in regional and international assessment benchmarking studies, such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Southern and East Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), as well as national assessment studies, such as the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) in South Africa. Although some of these studies may contain some teacher variables, their primary focus is on learners.

Notable among longitudinal studies on teachers is the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), which asks teachers and school leaders about the conditions that contribute to the learning environments in their schools; the Eurydice network's teacher data series; aspects of SACMEQ, specifically the SACMEQ III study conducted in 2007, which included components that tested teachers' subject knowledge and the TIMSS 2011 study which asked questions on teachers' qualifications and experience. Other related studies that are discussed in this review are findings from the Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS) in the United States and a study by the Western Cape Education Department.

### II. EUROPE: THE TEACHING AND LEARNING INTERNATIONAL SURVEY (TALIS) STUDY

The OECD claims this is the first international survey examining teaching and learning environments in schools. TALIS began in 2008 in 24 countries, focusing

on lower (junior) secondary education. TALIS 2013, which now includes more than 30 countries, continued with the main focus in lower secondary, however, six countries also opted to survey their primary schools (Denmark, Finland, Mexico, Norway, Poland and Belgium) and 10 countries included upper (senior) secondary schools (Australia, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Singapore and United Arab Emirates). Further, 8 countries chose to gain additional insights by surveying schools that participated in the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

TALIS asks teachers and school principals about their work, their schools and their classrooms. More specifically, TALIS examines the ways in which teachers' work is recognised, appraised and rewarded and assesses the degree to which teachers perceive that their professional development needs are being met. The study provides insights into the beliefs and attitudes about teaching that teachers bring to the classroom and the pedagogical practices that they adopt, including factors relating to teachers' job satisfaction and self-efficacy and as such, is strongly focussed on teacher professionalisation issues. Moreover, TALIS examines the roles of school leaders (principals) and the support that they give their teachers. (OECD, 2014a: 1)

#### *RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY*

A conceptual framework, based on effective teaching and learning theories, was developed to guide the development of the TALIS instruments by subject-matter experts, an international research consortium and the OECD. The target population for TALIS is composed of lower secondary teachers and their school leaders in mainstream public and private schools. In each country, a representative sample of 20 teachers and their school principal from 200 schools was randomly selected for the study. Approximately 106 000 lower secondary teachers responded to the survey, representing more than 4 million teachers in more than 30 participating countries. By way of a country example, in Australia, 2 059 lower secondary teachers and 116 principals in 123 schools completed the TALIS questionnaires. Questionnaires (paper and online) for teachers and school leaders, requiring between forty five and sixty minutes to complete, were used to gather the data. The questions focussed on teacher characteristics, working

environments, leadership, learning and development opportunities, appraisal and feedback, pedagogical practices and beliefs, self-efficacy and job satisfaction. (OECD, Country Note Australia, Results from TALIS 2013: 4)

### *KEY FINDINGS*

Key findings from the TALIS 2013 study relating to teacher professionalism and accountability issues across all three levels of education were:

- Less than a third of teachers believe that teaching is a valued profession in their country. Nevertheless, teachers who report that they can contribute to school decisions are more likely to report that teaching is valued in their society;
- Teachers with more than five years of teaching experience report a stronger belief in their ability to teach (self-efficacy), as do teachers who work with their colleagues. In almost all countries, teachers who report participating in collaborative professional learning at least five times a year report notably greater self-efficacy;
- Formal performance appraisal and feedback on practice help teachers improve. More than six in ten teachers report that appraisals lead to positive changes in their teaching practices, and more than half report that appraisals lead to positive changes in both their use of student assessments and their classroom-management practices. However, when teachers believe that appraisal and feedback is performed only for administrative purposes they report less job satisfaction [*this is similar to research findings in South Africa discussed in Part I of this working paper*];
- As with the first cycle of TALIS in 2008, lower (junior) secondary teachers report that they participate in professional development activities. In TALIS 2013, an average of 88% of teachers in lower secondary education report engaging in professional development in the previous year. The reasons most often cited by teachers for not participating in professional development activities are conflicts with work schedules and the absence of incentives for participation. In general, teachers report



higher participation rates in professional development in countries where they also report higher levels of financial support;

- On average, teachers are well-educated, with the majority reporting that they completed university or equivalent education and a programme to prepare them for becoming a teacher. In addition, teachers whose formal training included the specific content, pedagogy and classroom practice of the subjects they teach report feeling better prepared for teaching; and
- Learning environments are, on average, well-resourced and relationships reported amongst the teaching staff and between teachers and students are generally positive. However, more than a third of teachers work in schools with significant staffing shortages of qualified teachers, teachers for students with special needs, and support personnel.

### III. EUROPE: EURYDICE

The Eurydice network consists of 40 national units based in 36 countries (EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Eurydice is co-ordinated by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Its work is driven by the need to ensure high quality teaching, with specific reference to provide adequate initial teacher education, continuous professional development for teachers and trainers, and to make teaching an attractive career-choice. (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013, 3)

### METHODOLOGY

One of the mechanisms used to evaluate progress in education in European countries is through the publication of the Key Data series, which seeks to combine statistical data and qualitative information on education systems. In this section, findings from the first edition of the Eurydice publication *Key Data on Teachers and School Leaders in Europe* (2013), which gives an exhaustive picture of the teaching professions in 32 European countries, are reviewed. Based on data collected through the Eurydice network, Eurostat, from the contextual questionnaires of the TALIS 2008 and PISA 2009 international surveys carried

out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as well as from the TIMSS 2011 survey carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), and PISA international surveys, the report provides standardised and readily comparable quantitative and qualitative indicators which offer an overview of a variety of issues related to the teaching profession in Europe, including what occurs in practice in schools and classrooms. (ibid, 11)

Questionnaires were prepared by the EACEA jointly with National Units in the Network. As noted above, the Eurydice Unit within the EACEA also exploited the findings of the context-oriented questionnaires in the TALIS 2008, PISA 2009 and TIMSS 2011 surveys. All analytical content based on qualitative and quantitative data in the report was drafted by the Eurydice Unit within the EACEA. The Eurydice Network undertook the checking of the content of the entire report. (ibid, 12)

#### *KEY RELEVANT FINDINGS*

**Teacher autonomy and responsibilities indicator:** This indicator looked at the decision-making responsibilities of teachers in two main areas: in the area of teaching and human resource management. The area of teaching covers decisions on curriculum content, the choice of teaching and assessment methods, the selection of school textbooks and the grouping of students for teaching purposes. In most European countries, teachers in primary education can act relatively autonomously in matters relating to teaching. In particular, the choice of teaching methods is left to the discretion of teachers in almost all countries. Greece is the only country where the responsible education authorities take decisions nearly on all the above teaching matters, while Belgium is the only country where the responsibility for such matters is in the hands of the school head/school management body. In secondary education, the picture is slightly different: in about half of the countries examined, decision-making is in the hands of school heads/school management bodies, except for deciding on teaching methods, which is still a teacher's prerogative in most countries.

The second area of decision-making considered here related to the management of human resources, including the selection and dismissal of

teachers, determining teachers' duties and responsibilities and the choice of school head. In this area, school heads/school management bodies are mainly responsible for decision-making in Europe. In a minority of countries, the responsible education authorities make such decisions; this is notably the case in Southern European countries such as Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus and Malta. Only extremely rarely do teachers make decisions in these areas.

Drawing on data from PISA, 2009, "instructional content" is the area where teacher groups (e.g. staff associations, curriculum committees, trade unions) exerted the most direct influence. Teacher groups largely influenced the decisions of instructional content in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia. In contrast, in Portugal and Iceland less than 10 % of 15-year olds were enrolled in schools where teachers could influence instructional content decisions. In these countries, educational authorities have deciding power on instructional content. Overall, educational authorities had more influence on instructional content than teacher groups in the majority of European education systems. Similarly, regional or national education authorities (e.g. inspectorates) and the school's governing boards exerted more influence on staffing than teacher groups. (ibid, 105)

**Teacher appraisal:** Some form of regulated individual teacher evaluation exists in almost all European countries. However, the vast majority of countries have a process of school evaluation in place, in which individual evaluation of teachers is only one part of a more complex system (*what is intended in current South African policies in this area*). In most countries, the school head bears responsibility for teacher appraisal, and in more than half of them, on a regular basis. Self-evaluation of teachers does not seem to be a very widespread requirement for evaluation procedures in European countries, and the data shows that student achievement is a criterion strongly taken into account in teacher appraisal procedures in many countries. (ibid, 19)

**Teachers' views on poor performance:** Only slightly more than a quarter of ISCED 2 (junior secondary) teachers in European countries agreed that, in their school, teachers would be dismissed because of sustained poor performance. However, there are significant differences between education systems. Very few teachers (less than 15%) think that sustained poor performance can lead to dismissal in Ireland, Austria, Slovenia, Norway and Turkey. In contrast, around

two-thirds of ISCED 2 teachers in Bulgaria and Lithuania feel that job results can have an impact. In Belgium (Flemish Community) and Slovakia, more than 30 % of ISCED 2 teachers agreed that, in their school, teachers would be dismissed because of sustained poor performance. In most of these countries, teachers are employed on a contractual basis by the school or local authorities (ibid, 56); which suggests pressure on contract teachers to perform optimally.

**School Heads views on teachers' lack of pedagogical preparation:** On average, only around 18 % of the ISCED 2 teachers surveyed had school heads who considered that in their school “teachers” lack of pedagogical preparation hindered instruction” “to some extent” or “a lot” in their schools. The country with the highest percentage of ISCED 2 teachers whose school heads felt that instruction was affected in this way was Italy with over 50 %, while the figure was lower, at around 40 %, in Turkey, Spain and Lithuania. In contrast, in Bulgaria, Estonia, Poland and Slovakia very few school heads considered that teachers' lack of pedagogical preparation hindered instruction to any significant extent. (ibid, 65)

**Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** has gained importance over recent years and is considered a professional duty in a majority of countries; while participation in CPD is necessary for promotion in terms of career advancement and salary increases in some countries. Schools in many European countries are obliged to have a CPD development plan for the whole school staff but only less than a third oblige individual teachers to have a personal plan. The most frequent incentive for participation in CPD activities is its contributing to promotions. CPD is rarely the sole condition for career advancement but often a necessary pre-requirement. Financial support is most often given in the form of free activities or participation in provider costs. Many schools also receive direct funding to pay for their teachers' CPD.

#### IV. UNITED STATES: SCHOOLS AND STAFFING SURVEYS (SASS)

In the United States too, longitudinal studies tend to focus more on learner achievement and school-to-work transition, with some coverage of teacher variables, such as qualifications and subject specialisation. Although not intended as a longitudinal study, research conducted by Darling-Hammond (2000) yields

some useful methodological insights, as well as findings relating to teacher professionalism and accountability issues, drawing on data from SASS and other sources.

### *METHODOLOGY*

In this study, the sample drew on teachers' data from one time period (the 1993-94 SASS) and linked it to student achievement and student characteristics from the 1990, 1992, 1994 and 1996 assessments in reading and mathematics. The 1993-94 SASS database linked surveys of 65,000 teachers (52,000 public and 13,000 private); 13,000 school principals (9,500 public and 3,500 private); and 5,600 school districts. Although the data contained information on teachers, such as salaries, induction policies, school climate and context variables (e.g., time to work with other teachers, teacher involvement in decision-making), professional development support, teachers' views of teaching, and their plans to remain in the profession, Darling-Hammond's study only used the data on teachers' qualifications (teachers' degrees, majors, certification status), teaching assignments, and average class size.

The study also included data from the public school district questionnaire on district hiring policies (whether districts require as a condition of hiring, full certification, graduation from an approved teacher education program, or a college major or minor in the field to be taught). Teacher quality variables constructed from the SASS data included the proportion of "well-qualified teachers", defined as the proportion holding state certification and the equivalent of a major (either an undergraduate major or master's degree) in the field taught. Additional data on each state, including policies regarding teacher education and licensing (number of weeks of student teaching required, presence of a professional standards board, percentage of teacher education institutions that are accredited), were collected directly from states and professional associations. (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 21-22)

## *FINDINGS*

Some key findings relating to teachers in this US study that have relevance include the following:

- Teacher quality characteristics such as certification status and degree in the field to be taught were very significantly and positively correlated with student outcomes. Characteristics such as education level (percentage of teachers with master's degrees) show positive but less strong relationships with education outcomes;
- The strongest, consistently negative predictors of student achievement, also significant in almost all cases, were the proportions of new teachers who were uncertified and the proportions of teachers who hold less than a minor in the field they teach; and
- The presence of a standards board was significantly associated with the proportions of certified and uncertified teachers. Depending upon how they were structured, some standards boards may have more authority and/or more commitment to prevent the hiring of unqualified teachers than some state agencies do. (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 23-30)

## *V. SOUTH AFRICA: INTERNATIONAL (TIMSS), REGIONAL (SACMEQ), NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL STUDIES*

Longitudinal studies pertaining to South Africa's schooling system, both national and international, highlight the bias towards learner performance data and the scant attention that is paid to teacher variables. These studies include: Annual National Assessments (ANAs) or systemic evaluation for the national component; and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) studies and Monitoring Learning Achievement Study (MLS) for the international component.

As Khosa (2010: 6) points out, while these studies focus on school functionality, learner performance and learner socio-economic status data, the focus on teachers is confined largely to teacher profiles and, with a few exceptions, almost no data is collected and analysed on teacher knowledge or teacher practice (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: LONGITUDINAL STUDIES PERTAINING TO SOUTH AFRICA'S SCHOOLING SYSTEM

	<b>Institutional functionality</b>	<b>Teacher Profiles</b>	<b>Teacher knowledge</b>	<b>Teaching practice</b>	<b>Learner performance</b>	<b>SES</b>
<b>TIMSS</b>	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes
<b>PIRLS</b>	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes
<b>SACMEQ</b>	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes
<b>MLS</b>	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes
<b>ANAs</b>	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes

*Source: Adapted from Khosa, 2010.*

For the purposes of this literature review, the TIMSS and SACMEQ studies offer useful insights as some of their surveys include teacher variables and these are discussed below.

### *I. TIMSS*

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is a cross-national assessment of the mathematics and science knowledge of fourth and eighth grade learners, conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) since 1995. It uses results from achievement tests and questionnaires conducted with principals, teachers and learners to ascertain learner achievement scores and contextual factors relevant to achievement. TIMSS was designed to align broadly with mathematics and science curricula in the participating countries. The results, therefore, can be used to determine the degree to which learners have acquired the mathematics and science concepts and skills likely to have been taught in school. The tests are constructed to measure achievement to help inform governments, policy makers and educators

about the proficiency of their learners at key points in the educational process, as well as provide an indication of the health of an education system.

South Africa participated in TIMMS in 1995, 1999, 2003 and 2011 and in all instances South Africa performed at the bottom of the middle income countries (HRDC, 2014: 5).

### *Methodology and sampling*

A stratified sampling methodology is used in which schools are selected on the basis of province, the language of teaching and learning and public or private status. For TIMSS 2011, the sample was drawn from public ordinary schools (256) and independent schools (29) to assess if there were differences in how they performed. Additional variables on the basis of each school's quintile ranking and former racial categorisation were also included as these normally serve as a proxy for privilege and resourcing (HSRC, Undated, 9).

### *Findings*

In the TIMSS 2011 study, professional satisfaction of South African teachers was reported as slightly lower than international averages with 42% of mathematics learners and 38% of science learners being taught by teachers who are satisfied with their profession. Internationally, 47% of mathematics learners and 47% of science learners are taught by teachers who are satisfied with their profession (HSRC, Undated: 7). This study also found that 89% of South African Grade Nine teachers felt "very confident" in teaching mathematics. However, Spaul (2013: 29) argues that this is a rather optimistic self-assessment as the South African teachers tend to overestimate their ability to impart the curriculum. According to Spaul (ibid), this has important ramifications when considering the demand for teacher training, since teachers who believe that they possess adequate content knowledge or are sufficiently adept at teaching are far less likely to seek out professional development opportunities.



Other findings relating to teacher professionalism focussed on gender, teacher qualifications and experience. In terms of gender, 42% of TIMSS mathematics learners and 57% of science learners were taught by female teachers, while in respect of qualifications, 60% of mathematics learners and 53% of science learners were taught by teachers who had completed a degree. Only 20% of South African learners were taught by teachers with less than five years of teaching experience. This is the same as for the international learners. One of the more interesting findings relate to *school safety*, the degree of order at schools as well as the incidence of bullying. Only 21% of Grade 9 learners were taught by mathematics teachers who rated their schools as “safe and orderly” and 55% by teachers who rated their schools as “somewhat safe and orderly”. By contrast, internationally, 45% of learners were taught by mathematics teachers who rated their schools as “safe and orderly” and 49% as “somewhat safe and orderly”. (HSRC, Undated, 6) These findings are instructive as they are likely to have a bearing on teachers’ understanding of professionalism and accountability in South Africa, given challenges relating to school security and violence in schools, and the increasing importance attached to the impact of social cohesion issues on teaching and professionalism.

## *II. SACMEQ*

In addition to international sample-based surveys, there is data from more regional studies, such as those carried out by the Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), co-ordinated by UNESCO. SACMEQ is a consortium of education ministries, policy-makers and researchers who, in conjunction with UNESCO’s International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), undertake longitudinal studies with a view to improve the research capacity and technical skills of educational planners to monitor general conditions of schooling and the quality of basic education. As with TIMSS, the primary focus of SACMEQ is on assessment of learner achievement. SACMEQ assesses the reading and literacy skills of Grade 6 learners in 14 countries in east and southern Africa. To date, there have been three SACMEQ surveys, starting with SACMEQ 1 (1995-1998); with South Africa participating in the second

(2000) and third (2007) rounds of SACMEQ. SACMEQ III will be discussed in some detail as it was the only survey, in which South African teachers participated.

### *SACMEQ III (2005-2010)*

All fifteen SACMEQ Ministries of Education (Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania (Mainland), Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) participated in the project. Its main purpose was to track trends in *a)* the general conditions of schooling, *b)* the reading and mathematics achievement levels of Grade 6 learners and their teachers, and *c)* the knowledge that learners and their teachers have about HIV and AIDS. (Moloi and Chetty, undated, 7) As noted, *this was the first nation-wide education survey in South Africa where teachers were tested, in addition to students*<sup>6</sup>. As such, this provides a valuable opportunity to better understand the impact of teacher-knowledge on student performance. (Spaull, 2011:5)

### *Methodology and sampling*

An important principle applied in the SACMEQ projects was that the methodology and instruments that were used in the SACMEQ III project in 2007 were the same as in SACMEQ II. This ensured comparability of the conditions of schooling and achievement results of Grade 6 learners from 2000 to 2007. (Moloi and Chetty, undated, 7) The main data collection for the SACMEQ III project covered a total of around 60 000 pupils, 8 000 teachers, and 2 800 school heads. (ibid, 14) For South Africa, the sample included 9083 Grade 6 students and 1488 teachers from 392 schools. Students completed three tests – Maths, Reading and Health – and, in addition, gave extensive demographic and home-background information. The teachers included 498 Reading teachers, 498 Maths teachers,

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<sup>6</sup> Although the SACMEQ II questionnaire did contain a teacher- test, due to South African teacher union objections, South Africa was one of the few SACMEQ countries that did not complete the teacher- test section of the SACMEQ II survey. This being said, in SACMEQ III teachers were allowed to refuse to write the tests, which some of them did.

and 492 Health teachers. Each completed the Health test, with Maths and Reading teachers also completing subject-specific tests for their respective disciplines. The school head was also surveyed and asked numerous questions relating to the school. (Spaull, 2013, 21)

The sample was stratified both by province (explicit strata) and school size (implicit strata). The “province” stratification was accomplished by separating the sampling frame into provincial lists before undertaking the sample, while the “school size” stratification used the number of Grade 6 students in each school. The sampling method of *probability proportional to size* (PPS) was used to select schools within strata and simple random sampling was used to select students within schools (SACMEQ, 2010: 4, cited in Spaull, 2011, 6). All questions in the survey were multiple-choice, with 55 reading questions, 49 maths questions and 86 HIV/AIDS questions. The level of the Reading-test questions ranged from *Level 1: Pre Reading* to *Level 8: Critical Reading*; the Maths-test questions ranged from *Level 1: Pre Numeracy* to *Level 8: Abstract Problem Solving*. The Health test consisted of 86 true-or-false questions regarding HIV/AIDS. The results from all three tests were standardised by SACMEQ to have a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100 in the first survey when these tests were introduced, and results from subsequent waves were converted to the same metric.

In addition to completing a questionnaire, one teacher who taught the majority of the sampled learners for each of Reading, Mathematics and Life Orientation (for the HIV and Aids test) also completed the relevant tests (Moloi and Chetty, undated, 18). However, not all teachers wrote the tests, thus only scores for 401 Grade Six maths and 415 reading-teacher scores were obtained. The Mathematics teacher test consisted of 42 multiple choice questions, 16 of which were common items drawn from the SACMEQ III Grade Six pupil mathematics test. (Spaull, 2013, 25-6). The teacher Reading and Maths tests were very similar to the student tests, with only a few more challenging questions included. SACMEQ used Rasch scaling to transform these scores into values which are directly comparable with student test-scores. Teachers wrote the same Health test as the students. (Spaull, 2011:6)

### *Sample-selection issue involving “teacher test scores”*

**Right of refusal:** Although teachers were asked to complete the teacher test, they were allowed to refuse to write it. Subsequently of the 498 reading teachers, 83 did not write the reading-teacher’s test (16.7%), of the 498 maths teachers, 97 did not write the maths teacher’s test (19.5%), and of the 492 health teachers, 65 teachers did not write the health test (13.2%). This created a problem if one wished to include the teacher test score variable since doing so would reduce the sample size by approximately the same percentage as the proportion of those teachers that did not write the test: roughly 15%. This is because it is only possible to include those students in the sample whose teachers wrote the test, and thus have non-missing values for this variable. Since there is likely to be a sample selection issue at play, with weaker teachers refusing to take the test, *it is possible that limiting the sample could bias the results*. If the missing values are not missing-at-random (MAR) their exclusion will necessarily bias the coefficients. The question is therefore the severity of that bias, and not the presence or absence of it. Although it may be possible to impute teacher-test scores, the fact that the selection process likely depends on the same variable as that which would be imputed (i.e. teacher knowledge) means that any imputation method would have its own complications. As such, teacher test scores were not imputed. In order to see whether limiting the sample would change coefficients in a material way, two regressions were run for each student regression; one including teacher test score (and thus a smaller sample size), and one excluding teacher test score (with the full sample). Apart from a few relatively minor variables becoming significant or insignificant where previously they were not, the coefficients on most variables did not change much. Thus, while it is unfortunate that there were no teacher test-scores for around 15% of students and that there is no easy way to impute this variable, the opportunity to include a teacher subject-knowledge variable is valuable enough to warrant limiting the sample. Therefore, teacher test-scores were included in all other regressions. (Spaull, 2011:12-13)

## *Findings*

Subject knowledge and competency: One of the most striking features relating to teachers is that the best performing Grade 6 pupils know more than some Grade Six teachers, albeit not their own teachers (cf. section on Methodology above). The top 5 per cent of Grade 6 pupils in South Africa (565 pupils) scored higher marks on the same mathematics test than the bottom 20 per cent of Grade 6 mathematics teachers in the sample (80 teachers). (Spaull, 2013, 29)

This was in spite of teachers across all provinces displaying *acceptable* competency levels (level 4 and above) in both the Reading (99.6% of teachers) and Mathematics (almost 100%) tests. However, teachers' competency at the desirable level (or level 8) was less impressive especially in Mathematics (about 32%), while there was a better showing for Reading (60%). The Western Cape, notably, had the highest percentage of teachers reaching level 8 in the reading test (93.9) and in the mathematics test (59.0). In Mpumalanga, only 4.5% of teachers reached level 8 competency in the mathematics test. (Moloi and Chetty, Undated, 49-50) The point is reiterated by Hungi *et al* (2011, cited in Spaull, 2013) who report that only 32 per cent of South African Grade 6 mathematics teachers have desirable levels of mathematics content knowledge, with the SACMEQ average of 14 African countries being 42 per cent. This is in stark contrast to many other poorer African countries with much higher proportions of maths teachers with desirable levels of mathematics content knowledge, for example: Kenya (90%), Zimbabwe (76%) and Swaziland (55%). The situation for reading teachers is slightly better with 60 per cent of South African Grade Six reading teachers having desirable levels of reading content knowledge, with the SACMEQ average being 58 per cent (Spaull, 2013, 25).

HIV and AIDS knowledge: Overall the average Grade 6 learner in South Africa was taught by a teacher whose mean score on HIV and AIDS knowledge test (HAKT) was 781, significantly above the SACMEQ mean. In all nine provinces the average Grade 6 learner was taught by a teacher who obtained a score above the SACMEQ mean and reached the desirable level on HAKT. However, there was a large HIV and AIDS "knowledge gap" between South Africa's Grade 6 learners and their teachers, which prompted the Department of Basic Education to propose an investigation into why well-informed teachers were

not able to transmit this knowledge to their learners. (Moloi and Chetty, Undated, 84)

Spaull (2011), however, using standard-regression analysis, argues that teacher-knowledge is not a significant determinant of student test performance. This is in stark contrast to the initial assumptions of most education researchers who would expect teacher knowledge to have a large impact on student performance. Importantly, the impact of teacher knowledge on student performance is much smaller for students from poorer backgrounds. It thus appears highly probable that students and teachers in poorer schools face multiple constraints which overshadow the impact of teacher knowledge (Spaull, 2011:22). *Spaull suggests that, as such, teacher knowledge may not be as strongly correlated with teacher quality as one might have expected.* Factors such as teacher motivation and the ability of the teacher to convey their subject-knowledge may better capture what makes a “good” teacher. (ibid: 23)

Continuing professional development: SACMEQ III reveals that nationally 79.3% of Grade 6 learners were in schools where the Reading or Language teacher had attended at least one course in continuing professional teacher development within the three years prior to 2007. According to (Moloi and Chetty, undated), this was a marked improvement of 10.5% from 2000. Concurring with this analysis, Spaull (2013, 29) reports that across the provinces teacher participation in continuing professional teacher development was reasonably high, ranging between 73.8% in the Eastern Cape and 90,8% in the Free State. And that in all provinces, except Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, this percentage had either remained the same or increased between 2000 and 2007. It is important to note that the reported percentages are limited to rates of participation and do not reflect the quality and content of the programmes attended. Notwithstanding the above, 71 per cent of these 80 teachers reported that they had attended at least one short in-service training course in the last three years, with the median number of courses for these 80 teachers being two courses. Of those 80 who did attend a course, 75 per cent reported they were “effective” or “very effective.” Thus, the focus should rather be on the actual, rather than the perceived, effectiveness of these courses. (Spaull, 2013, 29)

Pre-service training: The majority of Grade 6 learners were in schools where teachers had appropriate qualifications. At national level, 95.6% of Grade 6

learners were in schools where the Reading or Language teacher had received at least two years of initial teacher training and this percentage had remained virtually unchanged since 2000. It was fairly high across individual provinces, ranging from 89.1% in Limpopo to 100% in North West. (Moloi and Chetty, undated, 39)

Gender: In South Africa female teachers are in the majority at primary school level. In 2000 only 21 percent of Grade 6 learners were in schools where the principal was a female. This percentage increased to 35 percent by 2007, but was still relatively low. With relatively fewer female principals as role models, fewer girls are likely to aspire to lead schools, again widening gender inequality in the process. (Moloi and Chetty, undated, 40)

#### *THE HSRC TEACHER WORKLOAD STUDY*

In a study of educator workloads, Chisholm et al (2005, cited in Gamble, 2010, 30-31) found that teachers spend 6 - 56% of time-tabled time teaching. In this calculation teaching time refers to the time the teacher is engaged in teaching and learning activities (whole class instruction, individual tuition, new knowledge, and revision).

Factors which influence teaching time, and which have a bearing on teacher professionalism and accountability were:

- School level organisation to accommodate late starts of the school day or late arrival of individual teachers, early departures, little teaching done on Fridays, teachers and learners frequently being out of classrooms and a general atmosphere of noise and disruption;
- Classroom level organisation where teachers are in classrooms but spend time on marking and portfolio scrutiny, rather than on teaching; and
- Administration and assessment work, such as record keeping, inputting of marks and preparation of portfolios (0 - 23% of time).

Other staff activities which may contribute to teachers' "professional" image but which teachers seem to have little time for are: preparation and planning during

the school day; professional development; guidance and counselling; pastoral care which includes ground duty, detention, scholar patrol, feeding schemes and management and supervisory duties, including attending staff meetings. The overall conclusion drawn in this report was that time for learning and teaching and the role of teachers *as teachers* needed to be safeguarded and prioritised. (ibid, 31)

### *Western Cape Educator Supply and Demand study*

The findings of this study, titled *Educator Supply and Demand in the Western Cape*, and compiled by the Cape Higher Education Consortium in 2009, was based on school survey data received from 641 ordinary and special public schools (comprising 144 schools visited by fieldworkers and 497 schools that responded to a bulk email/posted survey). The overall sample covered approximately 42% of the whole population of schools in the Western Cape. Educator questionnaire data on 4 545 teachers at 151 schools was analysed to establish whether or not existing teachers in WCED schools were “adequately” qualified in terms of formal accreditation for the teaching of a learning area/subject in a particular phase/grade (i.e. specialization in the subject, learning areas and or phases that they are expected to teach) (Gamble, 2010, 29).

Some of the main findings are presented below:

- 5% of Western Cape teachers are unqualified or under-qualified in terms of current requirements, with a higher proportion of teachers in *rural* districts needing to upgrade their qualifications for future requirements than the proportion of teachers in *urban* districts. However, 10 245 WCED employed teachers (out of 30 640) are un- or under-qualified in terms of the *future* requirement of M + 4. This count implies that 33% will be under-qualified;
- Schools struggle to allocate and timetable existing teaching staff with subject specializations, obtained under a different system, into new areas of the school curriculum;



- Reduced capacity in subject expertise is most evident amongst teachers in the Intermediate/Senior Phase or middle school years for “newer” more integrated learning areas of Economic and Management Sciences and Arts and Culture. Teachers reported having to spend more time preparing for teaching because of having to teach new learning areas and because dimensions of learning areas/subjects are out of their fields of training (e.g. teachers teaching Natural Sciences more commonly have Biology as a subject in their qualifications than Physical Sciences);
- Particularly in the Intermediate Phase learning areas such as Mathematics and Natural Sciences are being taught by teachers who teach at grade levels beyond their levels of subject expertise. Given the cumulative nature of these knowledge domains, this means that under-preparedness of teachers at the middle school level may be contributing to a cumulative deficit in learners’ achievement in later grades.

Once again, as reported elsewhere in this review, the spotlight fell on the need for teachers to upgrade their content knowledge. The report also drew attention for the need to move ineffective teachers out of the system to make way for better-qualified and high quality new entrants into the system (ibid, 29-30). It should be noted that the Western Province schooling system is known to be among the better performing provincial systems in South Africa.

## VI. DISCUSSION

Overall, what is clear from this review of research on teachers is that, firstly, there are few longitudinal studies internationally and in South Africa that focus on teachers. Those that do, such as the TALIS study and SACMEQ, although focussing on factors such as teacher education and qualifications, employment status and performance appraisal, are understandably pre-occupied with the links between these teacher factors and learning outcomes. There is very little focus on *teacher perceptions and attitudes* relating to these concerns and how they may deepen our knowledge of teachers’ understandings of professionalism and accountability. Some of the results from the longitudinal studies relating to South

African teachers, such as the confidence levels of Mathematics teachers in the TIMSS 2011 study, have been challenged and could point to inherent weaknesses in the methodology, which may need to be corroborated by more qualitative data. Interestingly, some researchers, notably Spaul (2013) argue that teacher knowledge may not be as strongly correlated with teacher quality as one might have expected; and that factors such as teacher motivation and ability of teachers to convey their subject-knowledge may better capture what makes a “good” teacher. Significantly, the data on teachers merely skims the surface in probing issues relating to teacher professionalism and accountability, although it confirms the inadequacy of teachers’ content knowledge, and in South Africa’s case lack of appropriate qualifications, in key subjects. The results discussed above, however, do reflect on South Africa’s schooling system and the quality of its teachers. Similarly, explanations of why learners are failing to perform optimally within the schooling system, while these are acknowledged as multiple and varied, and most suggest the challenges are systemic, *poor teacher quality* is singled out as a central element of the challenges that need addressing (HRDC, 2014: 6).

Methodological issues relating to SACMEQ surveys have also been highlighted, notably, with regard to teacher unions’ influencing teachers not to take the test in SACMEQ II and teachers’ right of refusal to complete the test in SACMEQ III, which have led to sampling and “bias” challenges. There is also a view that the data on teachers’ content knowledge is far from being nationally representative, as most studies are small, isolated project-based inquiries in a particular region (for example, Spaul, 2013, 25). Further, that “(w)e do not have nationally representative data on the *attitudes, desires and values of South African teachers*” (ibid: 24). [Own emphasis]

## CONCLUSION

The subject of teacher professionalism and accountability remains controversial today, as it has been over many decades. Teacher professionalism is highly contested, and there are doubts as to whether it can be recognised or spoken off in the same way as other professions. What is undisputed in the literature is that teacher accountability regimes have become more entrenched in most education systems throughout the world, including South Africa. Teachers' work and responsibilities continue to intensify, and despite ongoing professional development activities and efforts aimed at "re-professionalising" teaching, teachers are often described as lacking in competence and in need of regular supervision. As a result, the notion of teacher autonomy is undermined, and by implication, the very idea of teacher professionalism.

A factor that works against any notion of teacher independence and professionalism is the inescapable fact that the majority of teachers in emerging economies like South Africa are employees of the state, accountable to an employer, which is often invoked in the public domain to apply pressure on teachers to improve the quality of their service. This has contributed to the argument that teaching is, at best, a "semi-profession", and that teachers are a "semi-autonomous" occupational group. Nevertheless, teachers in most countries continue to strive towards some notion of professionalism, claiming subject expertise and the need to make professional judgments both in the classroom and in pursuit of their careers. In so doing, teachers in South Africa invoke both unionist and professional identities. Currently, although teachers face mounting accountability regimes and erosion of their professional autonomy, their organisations, together with government and other stakeholders, are making efforts to be part of constructive democratic partnership initiatives, such as the NECT and the work of the HRDC, in pursuit of quality education improvements. There are also strong indications internationally, and in South Africa, that greater value needs to be attached to teachers' roles as "reflexive" and "transformative" professionals, given deepening social cohesion and related challenges.

In countries, such as the UK and the USA, the expansion of teacher accountability regimes in the context of post-modernity, is not always regarded as having "de-professionalising" effects, and is being constructed with the intention

of extending and deepening teachers' professional judgment in the art of teaching; whether this leads to the consolidation of teaching as a profession in the classical (or post-modern?) sense, and thereby, enhance the quality of education remains to be seen.

While there are a number of small-scale qualitative and policy studies relating to teacher professionalism and accountability issues<sup>7</sup>, as well as some quantitative research, such as the Western Cape teacher supply and demand study, longitudinal studies focussing on teachers' appear to be few and far between. This applies especially in relation to ordinary teachers' views and perceptions about their professional roles and challenges they face. Longitudinal research, such as TALIS and SACMEQ, have focussed largely on teacher education and subject knowledge matters, and the research findings in this regard are almost unanimous about the importance of professional qualifications and subject expertise for teachers to be effective and learners to be successful. While TALIS and the Eurydice network research have in recent years focussed more directly on teacher variables, such as teacher autonomy, teacher performance and craft knowledge, there is still a huge gap in education research that tracks teachers' personal experiences and perceptions of their professional lives and the challenges they face as teachers, especially over different time periods. In South Africa particularly, such research is only starting.

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<sup>7</sup> These are in the form of case studies and in-depth interviews with teachers, for example, Van Veen and Slegers' study of Dutch teachers' professional orientations and work demands (2006) and Perumal's study of South African teachers' personal and professional narratives in a human rights context in South Africa (2014).

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